# 180 QUESTIONS

## Enquiries about Islam

### Volume Two:
### *Miscellaneous Issues*

Compiled by a Group of Muslim
Scholars Under the Supervision of
Ayatullah al-ʿUzma Hajj Shaykh Nasir Makarim Shirazi

Translated by Shahnawaz Mahdavi

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## VOLUME TWO: VARIOUS ISSUES

Extracted from the Writings of
Ayatullah al-ʿUzma Hajj Shaykh Nasir Makarim Shirazi

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# TRANSLITERATION TABLE

The method of transliteration of Islāmic terminology from the ʿArabic language has been carried out according to the standard transliteration table mentioned below.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ء | ʾ | ض | ḍ |
| ا | a | ط | ṭ |
| ب | b | ظ | ẓ |
| ت | t | ع | ʿ |
| ث | th | غ | gh |
| ج | j | ف | f |
| ح | ḥ | ق | q |
| خ | kh | ك | k |
| د | d | ل | l |
| ذ | dh | م | m |
| ر | r | ن | n |
| ز | z | و | w |
| س | s | ي | y |
| ش | sh | ه | h |
| ص | ṣ | | |

| Long Vowels | | Short Vowels | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ا | ā | ـَ | a |
| و | ū | ـُ | u |
| ي | ī | ـِ | i |

سبحانه وتعالى - Free from Imperfections and Exalted is He

صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم - Prayers be upon him and his family

عليه السلام - Peace be upon him

عليها السلام - Peace be upon her

عليهم السلام - Peace be upon them

بِسْمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

# A FEW WORDS ABOUT THIS BOOK BY AYATULLAH AL-UZMA MAKARIM SHIRAZI

QUESTIONS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN a key to the treasures of human knowledge, and individuals and nations who tend to question less come to acquire a reduced share from this vast treasure. Basically, it is the right of every person to ask questions and obtain their answers, and none can be deprived of this logical and rational privilege.

The Noble Qurʾān has repeatedly emphasized this aspect - ask those, who possess knowledge, about that of which you do not possess knowledge.

﴿ فَاسْئَلُوا أَهلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴾

The extensiveness of this Qurʾānic ruling reveals that Islām does not recognize any limits or restrictions as far as the issue of ‘questioning’ is concerned, and permits the Muslims and even the non-Muslims (despite appearing to be universal and general in meaning, this verse, in reality is addressed to the non-Muslims) to pose every kind of question, in connection with various doctrinal, social, ethical, political and other issues, to those who have knowledge about them.

Exceptions to this rule are misleading questions asked with the intention of spoiling people’s faith, distorting constructive ideas, fermenting disturbance and confusion in the minds of the public,

mere wrangling, baseless arguments, obstinacy and prejudice. In reality, these are not questions but destructive inhumane plots in the guise of questions.

In any case, since the Noble Qurʾān is a colossal encyclopaedia of divine sciences and human affairs, on numerous occasions and in connection with various verses, there are questions that come to the fore - a great number of which, due to lack of applicability in those periods, have remained unanswered in the books of past commentators.

While writing Tafsīr-e-Namūnah (with the assistance of some accomplished scholars), we strived to propound all these questions - especially those related to present-day issues - and to answer them explicitly and in detail.

Since it appeared essential that everyone, especially the educated youths, possess the answers to these questions, Ḥujjatul Islām Agha-e-Ḥusaynī and a number of honourable scholars of the Ḥawzah ʿIlmiyyah - whose names appear in the introduction of the book - exerted themselves greatly in extracting these questions and answers from the 27 volumes of Tafsīr-e-Namūnah and 10 volumes of Payām-e-Qurʾān. Consequently, they accumulated one hundred and eighty important questions and expended great effort in imparting a systematic arrangement to them (may Allāh accept their efforts).

It is hoped that this collection exposes a new opening for everyone - especially the beloved Muslim youths – regarding issues pertaining to Islām and the Qurʾān, and serves as provision for all of us for the Day of Judgment.

Ḥawzah ʿIlmiyyah, Qum
Nasir Makarim Shirazi

# BIOGRAPHY OF
# AYATULLAH AL-UZMA MAKARIM SHIRAZI

THE EMINENT SCHOLAR, Āyatullāh al-ʿUẓmā Shaykh Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī was born in the year 1924 in the city of Shīrāz in Iran into a religious family who were well known for their high level of spirituality and noble ethical traits. His Eminence finished his elementary school studies in Shīrāz, where his intelligence, excellent memory and eagerness to learn, made him amongst the best students, often completing two years of studies in one year!

The conditions which existed in Iran in those days obligated this young man - who possessed such talent and aptitude - to choose the path of University and use his gifts to attain a secular qualification. However, the hand of destiny and the blessings of the Merciful Lord and his own secret desire to become better acquainted with, and to delve deeper into the teachings of Islam, drew this young man's attention towards Islamic studies. Especially because, since after the spring of 1941 (when Iran became embroiled in the 2nd World War), the regime's restrictions relaxed and the Islamic Seminaries gained renewed popularity.

## HIS STUDIES

His Eminence started his formal Islamic studies at the age of 14 at Madreseh-ye Āghā Babākhān-e Shīrāz, and within a short period of time, he was able to complete the prerequisite preliminary studies such as morphology (ṣarf), Arabic grammar (naḥw), logic (manṭiq), exposition (bayān), and rhetoric (badīʿ).

He then turned his attention towards the fields of jurisprudence (fiqh) and principles of jurisprudence (uṣūl al-fiqh) and once again, due to his exceptional abilities, he was able to finish the study of the complete levels of introductory and both the levels of the intermediate Islamic studies in just four years! During this time, a

group of students from the Islamic Seminary in Shīrāz were also benefiting from his classes.

The positive criticisms and personal opinions of His Eminence concerning the classes being held in Qum and also in relation to the need for including extra information within the books that were being taught at the various Theological Seminaries hinted at the bright future which awaited him. Meanwhile in religious gatherings in this city, his capabilities, genius, meticulousness and deep thought were witnessed by others and no one was able to deny his God-given talents.

When this brilliant star was a mere 18 years old, through his penetrating thought and versatile pen, he wrote a commentary on the book Kifāyatu'l Uṣūl, in which he shed light on some ambiguous issues mentioned in this traditional work. At the age of 18, he formally entered the Theological Seminary of Qum and for the next five years, he attended the religious gatherings and classes of some of the greatest teachers of those days, such as Ayatullāh al-ʿUẓmā Burūjerdī ﵀ and other great personalities.

In order for His Eminence to become better acquainted with the illustrious scholars who were studying and teaching in one of the greatest Theological Seminaries of the Shīʾa, and to better understand their ideas and thoughts, in the year 1950, he made his way to the Ḥawzatul ʿIlmiyyah of Najaf al-Ashraf in Iraq. It was here that he was able to take part in the classes of some of the greatest teachers such as: Āyatullāh al-ʿUẓmā Ḥakīm ﵀, Āyatullāh al-ʿUẓmā Khūʾī ﵀ and Āyatullāh al-ʿUẓmā ʿAbdul Hādī Shīrāzī ﵀ and others.

At the age of 24, His Eminence was granted permission for independent reasoning (ijtihād) from two of the great scholars of Najaf al-Ashraf. In addition, Āyatullāh al-ʿUẓmā Ḥakīm ﵀ wrote a brief foreword to His Eminence's work, The Book of Ṭahārah.

His acquisition of knowledge continued with the great teachers in Najaf until economical restraints forced him to leave this holy city,

and return back to Iran in the year 1951. He chose to settle in the holy city of Qum, which in those days required religious scholars. Once again, he joined the circle of scholars who later on, had a profound impact on his life.

After returning to Iran, Āyatullāh al-ʿUẓmā Makārim Shīrāzī began teaching the intermediate and higher level of studies (khārij) in uṣūl al-fiqh and fiqh – and it is now close to 28 years that he has been teaching these classes, which have benefited a large number of students. In addition, after teaching many of the important books of fiqh, he went on to write summaries and notes of these great works. At present, his sessions at the khārij level on uṣūl are one of the most popular classes in the Ḥawzatul ʿIlmiyyah of the Shīʿa and there are close to 2,000 dedicated scholars and students who attend and benefit from his lectures.

From the time of his youth, he used to write books in various fields of Islamic studies such as theology, Islamic awareness and the issue of wilāyah (of the Ahlu'l Bait عليهم السلام). Later, he started to write on the exegesis of the Qurʾān, fiqh and uṣūl al-fiqh and he is currently recognized as one of the important writers in the Muslim world.

## POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

He played an active role in the events which culminated in the Islamic Revolution of Iran, and it is because of this that the Shah imprisoned him several times. He was exiled on three separate occasions to the cities of Chabhār, Mahābād and Anārak. After the Revolution, he was appointed to the first Council of Representatives (Majlis-e Khubragān) where he played an important role in formulating the first constitution.

## HIS VALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS

Āyatullāh Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī has been very active in various fields of teaching and guiding the upcoming scholars of the

Theological Seminary of Qum, and vhas initiated various projects, of which we will mention just a few:

1. A Religious Publication of the Shīʿa Centre : For a long time, His Eminence felt the need for the Ḥawzatul ʿIlmiyyah of Qum to have a general publication which would be able to defend the Shīʾa against the ever-growing works that were being published to misguide people.

In addition, people had always expected this from the great Islamic seminaries and there was pressure from different parts of the community, including the supreme religious authorities (marāja-ye taqlīd) of the Ḥawza and others, to publish a magazine that would be able to answer the religious enquiries of the youth and also to counter the books and magazines that were misleading the people.

Due to the fact that at that time, there were some intellectuals who were not ready to accept such a publication, His Eminence sought out serious and resourceful thinkers to shoulder the heavy responsibility of producing such a publication. In this regard, His Eminence, along with a group of other scholars and the assistance of the leaders of the Ḥawzatu'l ʿIlmiyyah of Qum and the financial support of well-wishers, launched the magazine, "Maktab-e-Islam". This magazine was unprecedented in the Shīʾa world, and perhaps from the point of view of the range of its circulation, it is amongst the leading religious magazines being published in the entire Muslim world. This magazine gave a fresh and new path of direction to the great students and thinkers of the Ḥawzah.

At present, this publication is in its 39th year - offering its valuable services to the Muslim world and the Shīʾa communities. It has found a special spot within the hearts of the youth, the university students, teachers and other learned personalities and it is has spread the light of Islam and Tashayyuʿ from its centre (Qum) to the entire world.

2. Organizing Gatherings to Offer Lessons in Theology and other Religious Teachings: His Eminence felt that the classical works that had been written in the field of Islamic Theology were no longer sufficient, with the passing of time, to address modern needs. The traditional books of theology had been written in a century when the kind of problems we encounter today did not exist. The older books discussed theological issues such as the disputes between the Ashʿarites and the Muʿtazilites and other similar topics, which are no longer applicable today and which have become just of passing interest only.

Due to these facts, His Eminence, once again calling upon his literary talents and abilities, was able to present the subjects of theological and principal beliefs in a novel and unprecedented manner. By organizing theological discussions, he made hundreds of people become conversant with these subjects, and he compiled the summaries of these sessions in the form of books.

3. Religious Council for the Protection of the Youth: In addition to sessions on theology, His Eminence organised other classes through which his students were also instructed about the teachings of eight current world religions so that they could engage in debates or correspond with the proponents of these faiths and counter their beliefs and ideologies.

Within a short period of time, these classes were able to produce able students who were well informed in their specialized field of study and today, an elite group of youth within the Ḥawzatul ʿIlmiyyah, are busy studying these topics. Furthermore, in order to safeguard the youth from the clutches of corruption, His Eminence formed an organization called the Religious Council for the Protection of the Youth. One of the outcomes of this council was the publication of material that was interesting to the youth, and these quickly became established amongst the youth in the country.

4. Struggles Against Eclectic Tendencies: On one of his trips to the city of Shīrāz, His Eminence noticed that sūfism had gathered

popular support. A group of people requested him to write a book which would outline the principles of the sūfīs – one that would explain their beliefs in an agreeable and respectful manner. His Eminence, by making use of the resources available to him, wrote this book in his usual style, and the book was printed in the year 1953 CE with the title, Jalwā-ye Ḥaq (The Manifestation of Truth).

The style in which he wrote this book caught the attention of the late Āyatullāh al-ʿUẓmā Burūjerdī ﷺ and he requested His Eminence to see him and congratulated him for his valuable efforts. In relation to this book, Āyatullāh al-ʿUẓmā Burūjerdī ﷺ made the following commendation, "I have gone through this book in my spare time and did not find even the smallest of weak points in it. May Allāh reward you for your troubles."

5. Establishing Organizations and Centres of Learning: His Eminence had made the intention of establishing such organizations in the same number as the Maʿṣūmīn عليهم السلام, which is 14. By the grace of God, he has thus far been successful in establishing four such important schools within the Theological Seminary of Qum and two religious organizations for the welfare of the students who are living in the city of Mashad.

6. Writings – The number of publications of His Eminence currently lies at approximately 130 books which have all been printed – some of which have been reprinted more than 30 times and others which have been translated into more than 10 languages and have been published in various parts of the world.

The commentary of the Qurʾān authored by him, Tafsīr-e-Namuneh (The Model Commentary) has been translated into many languages, including Arabic (al-Amthāl Fī Tafsīr al-Qurʾān), and can be found in many homes. An English commentary of the Qurʾān entitled, "Light of the Holy Qurʾān" is also currently being published which is largely based on this work. In addition to this commentary, he has also authored a thematic commentary of the Qurʾān entitled, Payām-e-Qurʾān (The Message of the Qurʾān) in ten volumes. These

two commentaries have opened up a new chapter in the field of exegesis of the Noble Qurʾān.

One complete course in usūl al-dīn has been covered in the first series of Payām-e-Qurʾān, while the author has recently embarked on a second series covering ethics (akhlāq) in the Qurʾān. The first volume of this commentary has recently been translated into English and will be printed soon by the World Federation of KSIMC, based in the United Kingdom.

In addition, the books he has written on theological beliefs have ably provided a defence for students and scholars against the onslaught of books containing false beliefs and untruths.

Of the books of fiqh that he has written, we can mention the following: Anwār al-Fuqahah, al-Qawāʿidu'l Fiqhiyyah, Anwār al-Uṣūl and the notes and commentaries on the complete text of ʿUrwat al-Wuthqā which have been printed many times over.

His practical guide for Muslims (Tawḍīh al-Masāil) has also been printed many times and has also been translated into Arabic, Urdu, Turkish, Azari and English.

A complete list of other publications of this great scholar which have been translated into English and are available is as follows. Most of these can be read on his website at www.makaremshirazi.org.

1. Ethical Discources [40 Lectures on Ethics and Morality] – Volume 1, 2 & 3 translated by Saleem Bhimji –published by the World Federation of KSIMC [www.world-federation.org]

2. Khums: The Islāmic Tax translated by Saleem Bhimji – published by the Islāmic Humanitarian Service [www.al-haqq.com]

3. Lessons in Islāmic Beliefs – Tawḥīd, ʿAdalāh, Nubuwwāh, Imāmah, and Maʿād translated by Laleh Bakhtiyar – published by Ansariyan Publications [www.ansariyan.org]

4. Life Under the Grace of Ethics translated by Monir Shafiei - published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]

5. Message of the Qurʾān – A Thematic Exegesis of the Noble Qurʾān Volume 1 of 10 translated by Saleem Bhimji - published by the World Federation of KSIMC [www.world-federation.org]

6. One Hundred and Eighty Questions – Volumes 1, 2 & 3 translated by Shahnawaz Mahdavi - published by the World Federation of KSIMC [www.world-federation.org]

7. One Hundred and Fifty Lessons for Life translated by the office of Āyatullāh al-ʿUẓmā Shaykh Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī – published by Ansariyan Publications [www.ansariyan.org]

8. Our Beliefs translated by the office of Āyatullāh al-ʿUẓmā Shaykh Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī - published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]

9. Philosophy of Islāmic Rulings written in co-operation with Āyatullāh Ja'far Subḥānī Translated by Sayyid Athar Rizvi – published by Ansariyan Publications [www.ansariyan.org]

10. Summary of the Islāmic Rulings translated by ʿAlī Abdul Rasheed - published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]

11. Tafsīr of the Noble Qur'an – Sūratul Jinn translated by Saleem Bhimji – published by the Islamic Humanitarian Service and the World Federation of KSIMC [www.al-haqq.com] & [www.world-federation.org]

12. The Ḥadīth of Ghadir – The Expressive Evidence for Imāmate translated by the office of Āyatullāh al-ʿUẓmā Shaykh Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī - published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]

13. The Noble Qurʿan – Translation and Commentary – Volume 1 translated by Mansoor Amini - published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]

14. The Noble Qurʾān – Translation and Commentary – Volume 2 translated by Mansoor Amini - published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]

15. The Noble Qurʾān – Translation and Commentary – Volume 3 translated by Mansoor Amini - published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]

16. The Noble Qurʾān – Translation and Commentary – Volume 4 translated by Mansoor Amini - published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]

17. The Islāmic Laws translated by the office of Āyatullāh al-ʿUẓmā Shaykh Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī - published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]

# INTRODUCTION

ALL THROUGH THE AGES, distinguished Shiʿite scholars have authored numerous commentaries, some of which have been a source of benefit for the scholars, the Ḥawza ʿIlmiyyah and those who have been attracted to the Qurʾān. However, a commentary possessing the excellences of Tafsīr-e-Namūnah - and that too in the Persian language - was found to be lacking, especially in this period of time wherein there is an ever-increasing focus towards comprehending the Noble Qurʾān.

Āyatullāh al-ʿUẓmā Makārim Shīrāzī, with the co-operation of some distinguished scholars, has fulfilled this requirement and done an invaluable service to the Noble Qurʾān by authoring this valuable commentary

Some of the features of this commentary, which have contributed to its extra-ordinary universality and attraction, are as follows:

1. Although this commentary is in Persian, its scientific and research aspects have been given such consideration and emphasis that it benefits not only the common masses, who are interested in comprehending the Qurʾān, but also scholars and men of learning.

2. While interpreting the verses, rather than dwelling on unnecessary issues, particular attention has been paid to those important issues that could have a great influence and impact upon the lives of individuals and the social life of the society.

3. In connection with the topics that are propounded in the verses, separate and succinct discussions have been presented in this commentary in such a manner that a brief study of these would make the reader independent of the need to refer to other books on these topics.

4. The use of intricate terminology has been avoided; nevertheless, whenever necessary, explanations have been provided in the

footnotes so that in addition to scholars and people of learning, this commentary is also useful for the general public.

5. One of the important distinctions of this commentary is that it presents solutions for present-day issues, and answers for various kinds of questions and objections pertaining to the Uṣul and Furūʿ of religion, and Islāmic sciences and culture.

In view of these salient features, we sought permission from the reverend teacher for collecting the questions and answers separately, and presenting them before the general public, especially the dear youths. Fortunately, he responded positively to our request and so, with the co-operation of friends, Ḥujjaj al-Islām Aḥmad Jaʿfarī, Sayyid ʿAlī Riḍā Jaʿfarī, Sayyid Murtaḍā Mūsawī, Sayyid Asghar Ḥusaynī and Muḥammad Ḥusayn Muḥammadī, the entire Tafsīr-e-Namūnah and the subjective commentary Payām-e-Qurʾān were subjected to a detailed and meticulous study. All the instances extracted and the book - presently before you and containing 180 questions and answers - was then organized and made ready.

At this juncture it is necessary to mention a few points:

1. At times, answers to certain questions have been presented in various places in the commentaries (Tafsīr-e-Namūnah and Payām-e-Qurʾān) and so all the instances were collected and correlated in a special manner and arrangement, and mentioned in one place in this book.

2. In this collection care has been exercised to refrain from presenting questions pertaining to the commentary of the verses. This is because our objective was to compile those questions that are propounded in our religious society and not questions relating to the commentary of the verses – for the answers to the latter can be obtained only after a study of the entire commentary.

3. It may be questioned: ‘Is this collection not a repetition of the book ‘Pursish-ha Wa Pasukh-hae Madhhabi’, authored by the

reverend teacher and Āyatullāh Subḥānī?' In this regard it should be known that there are only 30 questions that are common to both of them.

4. Although the compilation of this book may appear to have been a simple task, however the various stages of the work, whether it be the studying of the commentaries, the extraction of the questions and answers, the arrangement and organisation of the repeated portions... demanded a great deal of time.

5. From the entire collection of 180 questions and answers, 143 questions are from Tafsīr-e-Namūnah, 35 from the commentary Payām-e-Qurʾān, one from Payām-e-Imām (the commentary on Nahjul Balāghah by the reverend teacher) and one from the book Aafaridegar-e-Jahān (a collection of the reverend teacher's lectures). It is hoped that this insignificant service finds acceptance by Haḍrat Baqīyatullāh - May our souls be his ransom.

Sayyid Ḥusaīn Ḥusaīnī

Qum

# 180 QUESTIONS – PART II
## VARIOUS ISSUES

### 1. What is the purpose of mankind's creation?

It is rare to find someone who has not asked himself or others the question: "What is the purpose of our creation?" A group of people continuously come into this world while another group leave it, becoming extinguished for ever - what is the idea behind this coming and going?

If we humans had not been living on this planet, what difference would it have made? Is it necessary for us to know why we have come and why we shall go? If we discover the reason, do we have the ability to acquire this objective? Subsequent to this question, numerous other questions loom, plaguing man's mind and thoughts.

Whenever the materialists ask themselves this question, they apparently cannot answer it since matter does not possess perception and intellect for it to pursue an objective. Hence, they have put themselves at ease in this regard by convincing themselves of the insignificance of man's creation!

Is it not strange that these people envision precise aims and plan systematic programs for the minute details of life such as education, job, work, treatment, medication and sports, but, when they view life as a whole, they considers it to be aimless?

Thus, it is not astonishing that when a group from amongst such people reflect upon these issues, they become discontented by this vain and purposeless life and consequently resort to suicide.

However, when a God-worshipping person asks himself this question, he never finds himself in despair. Primarily, he knows that the Creator of this world is Wise and therefore His act of creation is

undoubtedly based on wisdom - although some men might not be aware of it; secondly, viewing every part of himself, he observes that each one possesses an objective. Not only the brain, heart, blood vessels and the nerves, but even the nails, eyelashes, fingerprints, the depressions in the palms and the feet; each has a philosophy attached to its presence which has been identified and proven today.

How naïvely we reflect when we consider all of these to individually possess a purpose but to collectively lack an objective!

What kind of absurd judgment it is that identifies an objective for the construction of each building within a city, yet denies the existence of any purpose for the city itself!

Is it conceivable that an engineer constructs a great building in which all the rooms, passages, doors, hatches, ponds, gardens and the décors have been meticulously built with a particular purpose in mind, whilst the building itself has been constructed without any objective?

These are the points which provide conviction to a believing person that this creation pursues a great objective, which he should strive to comprehend by means of his intellect.

Furthermore, it is amazing that when the advocates of the purposelessness of creation venture into the fields of physical sciences, they relentlessly endeavor to uncover the aim of various phenomena which they happen come across; so much so that they are unwilling to consider the insignificance of even one small gland situated in a corner of the body - experimenting for years to uncover the reason behind its existence. However, when it comes to the creation of man, they unequivocally claim it to be without an objective! What a bizarre contradiction!

In any event, belief in the Wisdom of Allāh ﷻ and attention towards the purpose of the various parts of man, imparts a firm conviction

to us that there exists a great significance behind the creation of man.

Having comprehended this, we ought to strive to understand this purpose and, to the best of our abilities, set off towards achieving it.

Attention towards one fundamental point might serve to illuminate our path and thereby make our journey easier:

All of our actions are always motivated by an objective; and this goal usually involves combating our flaws and fulfilling our requirements. Even acts such as serving someone, helping a person in distress or practicing self-sacrifice; each serve to do away with shortcomings and fulfill our spiritual needs.

Accordingly, in contemplating the attributes and acts of Allāh ﷻ we usually blunder by comparing them with ours, often asking: What flaws and shortcomings did Allāh ﷻ possess that could possibly be eliminated by creating us? Or, when we read in the Qurʾān, which states that the purpose of man's creation is worshipping Allāh ﷻ, we ask: Why does He need our worship? We do not realize that these thoughts stem from an erroneous comparison of the attributes of the Creator with the created.

Man indeed is a limited and confined entity which strives to do away shortcomings and hence concentrates its efforts towards achieving this objective. However, this concept is meaningless with respect to an Entity that is unlimited and infinite, and hence we ought to seek the objective and purpose of His acts in entities other than Him.

He is an abundant overflowing spring and the bounty-creating Originator who, having taken the entire creation within the canopy of His support, nourishes and fosters them, leading them from imperfection towards perfection. This is the actual purpose of our servitude (towards Allāh ﷻ) and this is the philosophy of our worship and prayers, which are indeed training classes for leading us towards perfection.

Consequently we conclude that the purpose of our creation is the (achievement) of perfection of our selves.

Basically, the actual act of creation – that is to move from non-existence into existence, from a non-entity into an entity, from zero to a figure - is a huge step towards perfection, subsequent to which start the other phases that lead towards this goal, including the entire religious set-up which emphasizes this objective.[1]

### 2. Why did Allāh ﷻ not create mankind perfect from the onset?

This objection stems from an oversight of the fact that the main branch of perfection is voluntary perfection. In other words, perfection (and development) means that man traverses the path using his own feet and by means of his resolve. If he were to be held by the hand and taken by force, neither would it be a matter of glory nor would real perfection be achieved.

For example, if a person out of his own will decided to give one riyal from his wealth in charity, he would have progressed towards moral perfection in that same ratio, whereas if millions were to be taken forcefully from him and given in charity, he would not have advanced even one step towards this goal. It is for this reason that in various verses of the Qurʾān this reality has been asserted that had Allāh ﷻ desired, all the people would have become believers, under compulsion. However such faith would not have proved beneficial to them.[2]

﴿ وَ لَوْ شَآءَ رَبُّكَ لآمَنَ مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كُلُّهُمْ جَمِيعاً ﴾

"And if your Lord had pleased, surely all those who are in the Earth would have believed - all of them."[3]

[1] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 22, pg. 389
[2] Ibid., vol. 13, pg. 375
[3] *Sūrat Yūnus* (10), Verse 99

### 3. What is the purpose of the perfection of man?

Some ask that although the aim of our creation is human perfection, what is the purpose of this goal?

The answer to this question shall become clear by considering the fact that perfection is the final aim or in other words, it is:

غَايَةُ الْغَايَاتِ.

### Explanation

If we were to ask a student: Why do you study? He would say: So that I can gain admission into a university.

If we ask: Why do you desire to get yourself admitted into a university? He would answer: So that I can become an able doctor or an engineer (for example).

If we ask again: Why do you desire to possess a medical or an engineering degree? He shall say: So that I may engage myself in a productive activity and also that I earn a good income.

If we were to persist and ask: Why do you need a good income? He would say: So that I can lead a respectable and comfortable life.

Finally if we ask him: Why do you desire to lead a respectable and comfortable life? At this juncture we shall notice that his tone changes and he will say: Well, so that I can lead a respectable and comfortable life.

He repeats his previous answer.

This proves that he has reached his final answer and, technically speaking, he has reached the غَايَةُ الْغَايَات - the final aim of his efforts beyond which there exists no answer and which constitutes his final aim and objective. This is with regard to the material life.

The case is similar in respect to the spiritual life too. When it is said: What was the purpose of the prophets, the revelation of the Divine Books, the religious obligations, and the educative set-up? We say: For achieving human perfection and attaining proximity to Allāh ﷻ.

Now, if it is said: What is the purpose of achieving human perfection and attaining proximity to Allāh ﷾? We say: For proximity to Allāh ﷾! This is the final aim. Expressing it differently, we desire everything for the sake of perfection and attaining nearness to Allāh ﷾, but we seek nearness to Allāh ﷾ for itself (i.e. nearness to Allāh ﷾).[4]

## 4. Why does Allāh ﷾ test people?

The topic of Divine trial is an issue of great debate and discussion. The first question that comes to mind is: Are trials not for understanding matters which are obscure, hence eliminating our ignorance? If so, why does Allāh ﷾, Who possesses knowledge of the hidden and the manifest of everything within the heavens and the earth, have to examine and test (the people)? Does there exist something, which is concealed from Him and which may become manifest for Him by means of examination?

The answer lies in the fact that the concept of examination with respect to Allāh ﷾ is vastly different from that, with respect to us.

Our examinations are that which has been stated above, i.e. for a better comprehension and for clearing away ambiguity and ignorance, whilst the Divine trials are, in reality, development and training.

### Explanation

In the Noble Qur'ān there are more than twenty instances of examinations that have been attributed to Allāh ﷾. This is a general law (of conduct) of Allāh ﷾, implemented by Him for the development of man's hidden abilities (and bringing them from potentiality into actuality), thereby enabling him to progress. Just as iron, for acquiring greater strength, is put into a furnace to make it tempered, similarly man is also nurtured within the furnace of adversities in order that he becomes steadfast.

[4] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 22, pg. 393

In reality, the examination of Allāh ﷻ resembles the work of an experienced gardener, who sows the seeds in a fertile soil. These seeds, benefiting from the natural bounties, begin to grow gradually - combating adversities, battling unfavourable conditions and enduring violent storms - until they end up in the form of a spray or a copious gargantuan tree, capable of continuing their existence in the face of hardships.

For the purpose of making soldiers tough, militarily, they are made to participate in numerous different exercises and war games, wherein they are subjected to various hardships such as hunger, thirst, heat, chillness, adverse conditions and severe obstacles, in order that they develop into accomplished, conditioned and proficient soldiers.

And this is the secret of Divine examinations.

The Noble Qurʾān has asserted this reality, when it says:

﴿ وَ لِيَبْتَلِيَ اللّٰهُ مَا فِي صُدُورِكُمْ وَ لِيُمَحِّصَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَ اللّٰهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴾

"And that Allāh might test what was in your chests and that He might purge what was in your hearts; and Allāh knows what is in the hearts."[5]

The Commander of the Faithful ؑ, in a statement very profound in meaning regarding the philosophy of Divine trials, says:

وَ إِنْ كَانَ سُبْحَانَهُ أَعْلَمَ بِهِمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَ لٰكِنْ لِتَظْهَرَ الأَفْعَالُ الَّتِي بِهَا يُسْتَحَقُّ الثَّوَابُ وَ الْعِقَابُ.

"Although Allāh is more aware of their souls than they themselves are, He tries them so that their deeds, which necessitate reward and punishment, become manifest."[6]

[5] *Sūrat Āle ʿImrān* (3), Verse 154

Accordingly, the internal attributes of man can only be a measure for reward or chastisement when they manifest themselves in man's actions. Allāh ﷻ tries man to enable that which he possesses in the interior to become manifest in deed and, his talents and abilities emerge from potentiality into actuality.

In the absence of Divine examination, these talents and abilities would have never flourished, and consequently the fruits of deeds would have never manifested themselves upon the branches of the tree of human existence; and this is the philosophy of Divine trials from the Islamic perspective.[7]

## 5. Is the 'prosperity' or 'wretchedness' of mankind, inherent?

In verse 105 of Sūrat Hūd, we read:

﴿ يَوْمَ يَأْتِ لاَ تَكَلَّمَ نَفْسٌ إِلاَّ بِإِذْنِهِ فَمِنْهُمْ شَقِيٌّ وَ سَعِيدٌ ﴾

"On the day when it shall come, no soul shall speak except with His permission, then (some) of them shall be unhappy and (others) happy."

The question which arises is: Does this verse indicate that man's prosperity and wretchedness is inherent?

There are several points that need to be taken into consideration:

1. It as we had mentioned earlier, there are some who, on the basis of such verses, have sought to prove that man's prosperity and wretchedness is inherent. However, not only do they fail to prove this point, but they clearly prove that wretchedness and prosperity are states which are acquired. This is because the verse says:

﴿ أَمَّا الَّذِينَ شَقَوْا... ﴾

"As for those who will be wretched..."

And:

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[6] *Nahjul Balāgha*, Short Saying 93

[7] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 1, pg. 526

﴿ أَمَّا الَّذِينَ سُعِدُوا... ﴾

"As for those who are fortunate..."

indeed, if prosperity and wretchedness were inherent, the verse should have said:

أَمَّا الْأَشْقِيَاءُ وَ أَمَّا السُّعَدَاءُ...

'As for the wretched ones' and 'as for the fortunate ones',

or something similar to this. Accordingly, it becomes evident that what Fakhr Rāzī has said in his commentary, when he says - In these verses, Allāh ﷻ has already ruled that on the Day of Judgment a group shall be fortunate and blessed whilst another group shall be wretched; and it is impossible for those, regarding whom Allāh ﷻ has passed this ruling and about whom, He knows whether they shall be fortunate or wretched, to bring a change within themselves. This is because, should such a thing ever take place, it would mean that the words of Allāh ﷻ were lies and His knowledge was (in fact) ignorance - and this is impossible!! – is totally baseless.

This is the popular 'knowledge of Allāh' objection, which is propounded in connection with the issue of *jabr* (compulsion) and *ikhtiyār* (choice). The answer to this claim is as follows:

If we desist from imposing our pre-conceived opinions upon the verse, then its meaning is clear, for it says: On that Day, a group shall be fortunate as a result of their deeds, while a group shall become wretched due to their deeds, and Allāh ﷻ is aware of those, who shall traverse the path to prosperity out of their own free will, and those, who shall advance towards wretchedness, out of their own will and choice. Thus, contrary to what Fakhr Rāzī has said, if the people were compelled to select a path, His knowledge would in reality be His ignorance since He had known that all the people would opt for the blessed and wretched path of out of their own will and choice.

A proof to what has been stated above is the fact that the above verses are mentioned pursuant to the narratives of the previous nations, a large number of whom, as a result of deviation from the path of truth and opposition to the divine leaders, were seized by a painful chastisement in this world. And the Qurʾān, with the objective of guiding us by distinguishing the paths leading towards prosperity and wretchedness, has recounted these narratives for us.

Essentially, as Fakhr Rāzī and other like-minded individuals imagine, if we were to possess inherent fortunateness and wretchedness, and if it were to be drawn towards good and evil deeds without any choice, all the teaching and training would be vain and futile. The coming of the prophets, the revelation of the Divine books, the advices, admonitions, encouragements, censures, rebukes, criticisms, remonstrations, Reckoning and finally, rewards and punishments - all of them - would be looked upon as either useless, or tyrannical!

Even those, who regard man as being compelled with respect to performing good or evil acts – irrespective of whether they consider this compulsion to be Divine compulsion, natural compulsion, economic compulsion or circumstantial compulsion, only advocate this theory when speaking or studying; however, when it comes to real life actions, even they do not profess this opinion. And it is for this reason that when their rights are trampled they regard the transgressor as deserving rebuke and punishment, never willing to condone him on the basis that he had been 'compelled' into performing this act (on the part of Allāh ﷻ) or regard punishing him as being unjust, or say: he could not refrain himself from committing the act, for Allāh ﷻ or nature or the environment forced him into it. This is another proof of the inherent nature of ikhtiyār (choice).

Furthermore, we do not observe any of those who follow the belief of jabr (compulsion), adhering to this belief in the course of their daily activities; rather, in their interaction with the people, they

always look upon them as individuals, who possess freedom and choice.

All the world's inhabitants, by setting up judicial systems for meting out punishments to the offenders, have practically acknowledged man's freedom of will.

All the educative institutions of the world too have implicitly accepted the opinion that man performs actions by means of his own will and inclination, and it is possible, by means of education, to distance him from errors, lapses and deviated thinking.

2. Interestingly, in the above verses, the word (شقوا) is in the active voice whereas the word (سُعِدُوا) is in the passive. This difference in expression could be a subtle allusion to the point that man advances upon the path of wretchedness by his own self, yet in order to advance upon the path of prosperity, he requires Divine assistance, in the absence of which he shall never be successful. Undoubtedly, only those who have stepped out in this direction out of their own choice and will, and have developed within themselves the worthiness to benefit from such support, shall come to receive it.[8]

## 6. What is the difference between Islam and Īmān?

In verse 14 of Sūratul Ḥujurāt, we read:

﴿ قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ آمَنَّا قُلْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَ لٰكِنْ قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا وَ لَمَّا يَدْخُلِ الإِيْمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ ﴾

"The dwellers of the desert say: We believe. Say: You do not believe but say, We submit; and faith has not yet entered into your hearts."

The question that arises here is: What is the difference between 'Islam' and 'Īmān'?

According to this verse, the difference between them lies in that Islam possesses the external form such that whoever recites the

[8] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 9, pg. 236

shahādatayn[9] enters into the category of Muslims, after which all the Islamic rulings shall become applicable with respect to him.

But Īmān is an issue, which is internal (to man), and is associated neither with his tongue nor his exterior, but rather his heart.

There could be various motives for Islam - even material and personal benefits, yet Īmān always stems from knowledge, awareness and spiritual motives and it is due to this Īmān that taqwa (piety) manifests itself. This is witnessed in an eloquent statement of the Noble Prophet ﷺ:

اَلْإِسْلاَمُ عَلاَنِيَةٌ وَ الْإِيــمَانُ فِي الْقَلْبِ.

"Islam is (a) proclaimed (issue), whereas Īmān is housed in the heart."[10]

In another tradition, Imām as-Ṣādiq ؑ has said:

اَلْإِسْلاَمُ يُحْقَنُ بِهِ الدَّمُ وَ تُؤَدَّىٰ بِهِ الْأَمَانَةُ وَ تُسْتَحَلُّ بِهِ الْفُرُوجُ وَ الثَّوَابُ عَلَــىٰ الْإِيــمَانِ.

"By means of Islam, the blood (of man) is safeguarded, trusts are returned, matrimony becomes lawful; but rewards are on account of Īmān."[11]

And it is for this very reason that in some traditions the concept of Islam has been confined to the vocal testimony, whereas Īmān has been emphasized as being testimony in conjunction with deeds.

اَلْإِيــمَانُ إِقْرَارٌ وَ عَمَلٌ وَ الْإِسْلاَمُ إِقْرَارٌ بِلاَ عَمَلٍ.

"True faith is to testify and to act while submission (al-Islām) is to testify prior to acting."[12]

[9] 'The two testimonies' - testifying to the Unity of Allāh and the Prophethood of the Noble Prophet ﷺ. (Tr.)

[10] *Majmaʿul Bayān*, vol. 9, pg. 138

[11] *al-Kāfī*, vol. 2, Chapter Inna al-Islam Yuhqanu bihi al-Damm, no. 1 and 2

This meaning is also seen under the discussion 'Islam and "Īmān'; Fuḍail ibne Yasār states: I heard Imām as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام say:

إِنَّ الْإِيــمَانَ يُشَارِكُ الْإِسْلاَمَ وَ لاَ يُشَارِكُهُ الْإِسْلاَمُ إِنَّ الْإِيــمَانَ مَا وَقَرَ فِي الْقُلُوبِ وَ الْإِسْلاَمَ مَا عَلَيْهِ الْمَنَاكِحُ وَ الْمَوَارِيثُ وَ حِقْنِ الدِّمَاءِ.

"Verily, Īmān teams up with Islam but Islam does not team up with Īmān. Indeed, Īmān is that which settles into the heart whereas Islam is that, which governs the rules of marriage and inheritance, and safeguards the (shedding of) blood (of man)."[13]

Nonetheless, this difference in meaning is applicable only when both these terms are used alongside each other, however if they are used separately, it is possible that Islam may refer to the same thing, which is referred to by Īmān; i.e. each of these two terms may be used synonymously.[14]

## 7. What is meant by 'Shayṭān' in the Noble Qur'ān?

The word Shayṭān is derived from the roots (شطن) and شاطن means 'impure and base'.

Shayṭān refers to an entity that is rebellious – irrespective of whether it is of the humans, jinn or animals. It is also said to mean 'a nefarious soul, who is distanced from Allāh and Truth'; all of these meanings, in reality, can be observed to be turning back to one common element.

It should be noted that Shayṭān is a 'common noun' whereas Iblīs is a 'proper noun'. In other words, every harmful, deviating and rebellious entity - human or otherwise - is referred to as Shayṭān. Iblīs is the name of that Shayṭān, who deceived Ādam and even presently, together with his soldiers and forces, lies in ambush of the humans.

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[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid., no. 3

[14] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 22, pg. 210

From the usage of this word in the Qurʾān, it can also be inferred that Shayṭān is used to denote a harmful being - one who has deviated from the right path and has embarked upon a mission of distressing others; an entity that attempts to create division, discord and corruption, just as we recite:

﴿ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُوقِعَ بَيْنَكُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَ الْبَغْضَاءَ ﴾

"Surely Shayṭān only desires to cause enmity and hatred to spring in your midst."[15]

The word يُرِيدُ is in the imperfect tense which denotes 'continuity', indicating that this 'desire' is a continuous and perpetual desire of the Shayṭān.

Furthermore, we observe that in the Qurʾān, the use of the term Shayṭān has not been restricted for a specific being; rather it has been used to refer to wicked and corrupt humans too. The Qurʾān says:

﴿ وَ كَذٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا شَيَاطِينَ الْإِنْسِ وَ الْجِنِّ ﴾

"And thus did We make for every prophet an enemy, the Shayṭāns from among men and jinn."[16]

That Iblīs has also been referred to as Shayṭān is because of the evilness and corruption that exists within him.

In addition to this, the word Shayṭān has been employed to refer to microbes too:

For example, the Commander of the Faithful ﷺ has said:

لاَ تَشْرَبُوا الْمَآءَ مِنْ ثُلْمَةِ الْإِنَاءِ وَ لاَ مِنْ عُرْوَتِهِ فَإِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَقْعُدُ عَلَى الْعُرْوَةِ وَ الثُّلْمَةِ.

[15] *Sūratul Māidah* (5), Verse 91
[16] *Sūratul Anʿām* (6), Verse 112

"Do not drink water from the broken portion of the vessel nor from the portion of the handle, for surely, the Shayṭān sits upon the handle and the broken portion."[17]

Imām as-Ṣādiq ﵇ has also said:

وَ لاَ يُشْرَبُ مِنْ أُذُنِ الْكُوزِ وَ لاَ مِنْ كَسْرِهِ إِنْ كَانَ فِيهِ فَإِنَّهُ مَشْرَبُ الشَّيَاطِينِ.

"(Water) should not be drunk from the handle (side) of a jug and nor from the broken portion of it, if present, for these are the drinking-place of the 'Shayṭāns'."[18]

The Noble Prophet ﷺ has said: "Do not lengthen (the hair of) your moustaches, for the Shayṭān makes it a haven for himself and conceals himself there!"[19]

Thus, it becomes clear that one of the meanings of Shayṭān is 'harmful microbes'. Nevertheless, this does not mean that it possesses this meaning on all occasions and in all instances. Rather, it means that Shayṭān has several meanings, one of the most obvious of them being 'Iblīs and his assistants'; another being 'corrupt humans'; while at times it is also employed to refer to 'harmful bacteria'.[20]

## 8. What is the reality of the Jinn?

It can be deduced from the literal meaning of this word that the Jinn is an entity that is invisible; numerous characteristics of this being are mentioned in the Qurʾān, such as:

1. It is an entity that has been created from the flames of fire, unlike man, who has been created from earth:[21]

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[17] *al-Kāfī*, vol. 6, Kitab al-Atiʿmah wa al-Ashribah, Chapter Bāb al-Awāni.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid.
[20] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 1, pg. 191
[21] *Sūratul Raḥmān* (55), Verse 15

﴿ وَ خَلَقَ الْجَآنَّ مِنْ مَارِجٍ مِنْ نَارٍ ﴾

2. Possesses knowledge, perception, the faculty of logic, the power of reasoning, and can distinguish between truth and falsehood (various verses of Sūratul Jinn).

3. Possesses (religious) obligations and responsibilities (verses of Sūratul Jinn and al-Wāqiʿah).

4. Some of them are believers while others are disbelievers:

﴿ وَ أَنَّا مِنَّا الصَّالِحُونَ وَ مِنَّا دُونَ ذٰلِكَ... ﴾

"There are among us some that are righteous, and some the contrary..."[22]

5. They shall be resurrected:

﴿ وَ أَمَّا الْقَاسِطُونَ فَكَانُوا لِجَهَنَّمَ حَطَباً ﴾

"And as to the deviators, they are fuel of hell."[23]

6. They initially possessed the power to penetrate into the skies, eavesdrop and procure news but were later prohibited:

﴿ وَ أَنَّا كُنَّا نَقْعُدُ مِنْهَا مَقَاعِدَ لِلسَّمْعِ فَمَنْ يَسْتَمِعِ الآنَ يَجِدْ لَهُ شِهَاباً رَصَداً ﴾

"And that we used to sit in some of the sitting-places thereof to steal a hearing, but, he who would (try to) listen now would find a flame lying in wait for him."[24]

7. They used to establish contact with some of the people and, by means of the limited knowledge of the Unseen that they possessed, endeavoured to misguide the people:

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[22] *Sūratul Jinn* (72), Verse 11
[23] Ibid., Verse 15
[24] Ibid., Verse 9

﴿ وَ أَنَّهُ كَانَ رِجَــــــالٌ مِنَ الْإِنْسِ يَعُوذُونَ بِرِجَالٍ مِنَ الْجِنِّ فَزَادُوهُمْ رَهَقاً ﴾

"And that persons from among men used to seek refuge with persons from among jinn, so they increased them in wrongdoing."[25]

8. From amongst them there are those who, like some humans, possess great powers:

﴿ قَالَ عِفْرِيتٌ مِنَ الْجِنِّ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَقُومَ مِنْ مَقَامِكَ ﴾

"One audacious among the jinn said: I will bring it to you before you rise up from your place; and most surely I am strong (and) trusty for it."[26]

9. They possess the power to perform some of the tasks that are required by man:

﴿ وَ مِنَ الْجِنِّ مَنْ يَعْمَلُ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِ وَ مَنْ يَزِغْ مِنْهُمْ عَنْ أَمْرِنَا نُذِقْهُ مِنْ عَذَابِ السَّعِيرِ يَعْمَلُونَ لَهُ مَا يَشَآءُ مِنْ مَحَارِيبَ وَ تَمَاثِيلَ وَ جِفَانٍ كَالْجَوَابِ ﴾

"And of the jinn there were those who worked before him by the command of his Lord; and whoever turned aside from Our command from among them, We made him taste of the punishment of burning. They made for him what he pleased of fortresses and images, and bowls (large) as watering-troughs and cooking-pots that will not move from their place."[27]

10. Their creation on the earth was prior to man's creation:

﴿ وَ الْجَآنَّ خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ مِنْ نَّارِ السَّمُوْمِ﴾

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[25] *Sūratul Jinn* (72), Verse 6
[26] *Sūratul Naml* (27), Verse 39
[27] *Sūrat Saba* (34), Verses 12, 13

"And the jinn We created before, of intensely hot fire."[28]

In addition, it can be clearly inferred from the verses of the Noble Qurʾān that, contrary to what is popular amongst the common masses, humans are a species superior to them. This can be concluded by the fact that all the divine prophets had been chosen from the humans; moreover, many jinn too had believed in the Noble Prophet ﷺ - who was a human - and pledged allegiance to him. Additionally, the obligation upon the Shayṭān of prostrating before Ādam at a time when he (the Shayṭān), according to the explicit statements of the Qurʾān, had been of the elders of the Jinn[29], further reinforces this idea of superiority.

The discussion thus far has revolved around the aspects that can be inferred about this invisible entity from the Noble Qurʾān, which is devoid of all superstitions and non-scientific issues. However, we do know that the general and the unaware masses have concocted great superstitions about this entity which neither conforms with logic nor intellect, and consequently have imparted an irrational appearance to this being such that whenever the word 'jinn' is uttered, a handful of strange ideas immediately come to mind – entities possessing dreadful appearances, who have horns and tails, are harmful, troublesome, malicious and ill-mannered, who can set a house on fire by pouring a cauldron of boiling water in one corner of the house! These are examples of such fanciful and superstitious beliefs!

If our perspective of the existence of jinn is purified from such superstitions, the main issue is totally acceptable for, there exists no reasoning to restrict living entities to only those that can be seen by us. On the contrary, scholars of natural sciences state: The entities that man can perceive by means of his senses are marginal in comparison to those that cannot be perceived by means of them.

[28] *Sūratul Ḥijr* (15), Verse 27
[29] *Sūratul Kahf* (18), Verse 50

Prior to the discovery of microscopic organisms, no one would have believed that in one drop of water or blood, there existed hundreds of thousands of living entities that man could not see.

The scientists also state: Our eyes can perceive a limited (range of) colours and our ears can hear a limited (range of) sound waves; the colours and sounds that cannot be perceived by means of our eyes and ears are more numerous than those that can be perceived by them.

When the state of the world is such, why should the existence of a species of living entities, whom we cannot perceive by means of our senses, be so fantastic and astonishing? And why should we not accept it when we have been informed of it by a truthful informer like the Noble Prophet ﷺ?

In any event, on the one hand, the Qurʾān has informed us of the existence of the jinn possessing the aforementioned characteristics; while on the other hand, there exists no rational proofs which deny the existence of such an entity. Accordingly, we ought to accept their existence but simultaneously disregard the inappropriate superstitions of the general public in connection with these beings.

It is important to note that at times, the term jinn is used in a more expansive meaning – one that tends to encompass a number of invisible entities, irrespective of whether they possess intellect and perception or not. In this expanded meaning of the word, even animals that are not seen by the eyes, usually remaining hidden in their lairs, are included.

This is proved by a tradition of the Commander of the Faithful عليه السلام wherein he says: "Allāh has created the jinn in five kinds – some are like the wind in the air (invisible), some are in the form of snakes, some in the form of scorpions, some in the form of the insects of the earth while some are like the humans and they shall be subjected to Reckoning and punishment."[30]

[30] *Safīnatul Biḥār*, vol. 1, pg. 186 (under جن)

In the light of the above tradition and its expansive meaning, numerous problems encountered in narratives with respect to the jinn appear to be solved.

For example, in some of the traditions of the Commander of the Faithful ﵇, we read:

لاَ تَشْرَبُوا الْمَآءَ مِنْ ثُلْمَةِ الإِنَاءِ وَ لاَ مِنْ عُرْوَتِهِ فَإِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَقْعُدُ عَلَى الْعُرْوَةِ وَ الثُّلْمَةِ.

"Do not drink water from the broken portion of the vessel nor from the portion of the handle, for surely, the Shayṭān sits upon the handle and the broken portion."[31]

In view of the fact that Shayṭān is from the jinn, and knowing the fact that the broken portion of the vessel and similarly its handle are places of accumulation of numerous microbes, it does not appear too far-fetched that jinn and Shayṭān, in their expansive meanings, should also include these entities too, in addition to possessing a specific meaning, i.e. an entity, who possesses understanding, intelligence and religious obligation.

And traditions in this regard are numerous.[32 and 33]

## 9. What is the reality Of Angels?

The Noble Qurʾān has spoken about the angels on numerous occasions with a great number of verses speaking of their attributes, characteristics and responsibilities. So much so that the Qurʾān places the issue of belief in the angels at par with belief in Allāh ﷻ, the prophets and the Divine books, and this itself is proof of the fundamental importance of this issue.

[31] *al-Kāfī*, vol. 6, pg. 385, Kitāb al-Atʿimah wa al-Ashribah, Chapter Bāb al-Awāni, no. 5.

[32] In vol. 1 of the book *Awwalīn Dānishgāh Wa Aakhirīn Payām*, approximately 20 traditions have been complied in this regard.

[33] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 25, pg. 154

﴿ آمَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ آمَنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَ مَلاَئِكَتِهِ وَ كُــتُبِهِ وَ رُسُلِهِ ﴾

"The messenger believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers; they all believe in Allāh and His angels and His books and His messengers."[34]

Undoubtedly, the existence of the angels is one of the issues of the ghaib (Unseen) and therefore, proving their existence and their characteristics cannot be accomplished except by means of transmitted proofs; hence, we ought to accept them according to the ruling of 'believing in the Unseen'.

The Qurʾān mentions their characteristics as follows:

1. The angels are entities that possess intelligence and comprehension, and are the honourable servants of Allāh ﷻ.

﴿ بَلْ عِبَادٌ مُكْرَمُونَ ﴾

"Nay! they are honored servants."[35]

2. They are totally subservient to Allāh ﷻ and never exhibit insubordination towards Him.

﴿ لاَ يَسْبِقُونَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ وَ هُمْ بِأَمْرِهِ يَعْمَلُونَ ﴾

"They do not precede Him in speech and (only) according to His commandment do they act."[36]

3. They have been assigned important and greatly varied responsibilities on the part of Allāh ﷻ.

A group upholds the ʿArsh (Throne).[37]

A group 'regulates the affair'.[38]

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[34] *Sūratul Baqarah* (2), Verse 285
[35] *Sūratul Anbiyā* (21), Verse 26
[36] Ibid., Verse 27
[37] *Sūratul Ḥāqqah* (69), Verse 17

A group of them are for the seizing of the souls.[39]

A group is vigilant of the deeds of the humans.[40]

A group protects humans from perils and untoward incidents.[41]

A group is responsible for punishing and chastising the rebellious and recalcitrant nations.[42]

Some angels are divine helpers for the believers during battles.[43]

And finally some of the angels bring down the Revelation and the Divine books for the prophets...[44]

...And if we were to enumerate each of their duties, the discussion would become greatly protracted.

4. They are perpetually engaged in glorifying and sanctifying Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, as we read in verse 5 of Sūratul Shūra.

﴿ وَ الْمَلاَئِكَةُ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لِمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ ﴾

“And the angels sing the praise of their Lord and ask forgiveness for those on earth.”

5. Despite all the above, man, due to his ability to develop and achieve perfection, is superior to them to the extent that all the angels, without exception, fell into prostration when Ādam عليه السلام was created and he became their teacher.[45]

6. Occasionally they take the form of humans and manifest themselves before the prophets and even individuals who are not prophets, as we read in the chapter Maryam عليها السلام that a great angel appeared before Maryam عليها السلام in the form of a ‘perfect’ man.

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[38] *Sūratul Nāziaʿat* (79), Verse 5
[39] *Sūratul Aʿrāf* (7), 37
[40] *Sūratul Infiṭār* (82), Verse 10 – 13
[41] *Sūratul Anʿam* (6), Verse 61
[42] *Sūrat Hūd* (11), Verse 77
[43] *Sūratul Aḥzāb* (33), Verse 9
[44] *Sūratul Naḥl* (16), Verse 2
[45] *Sūratul Baqarah* (2), Verse 30 – 34

﴿ فَأَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهَا رُوحَنَا فَتَمَثَّلَ لَهَا بَشَراً سَوِيًّا ﴾

“Then We sent to her Our spirit, and there appeared to her a well-made man.”[46]

On other occasions they appeared before prophets Ibrāhīm and Lūṭ عليهما السلام in the form of humans.[47]

From the end of these verses it can also be inferred that the people of prophet Lūṭ عليه السلام too witnessed them in that ‘measured’ human form.[48]

Is this appearance in the human form an objective reality? Or was it an imagination or a kind of seizing of the eyes? The apparent meaning of the verses seem to indicate the first meaning, although some distinguished commentators have opted for the second view.

1. From the Islamic traditions it can be inferred that they are so numerous that their numbers cannot be compared to the humans at all. We read in a tradition that Imām as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام was asked: Are the angels more in number or the humans? Whereupon he عليه السلام replied: “By Allāh, in Whose grasp is my soul! The angels of Allāh that are present in the heavens are more than the particles of sand present on the earth; in the heavens there does not exist a place to put one’s foot except that there is an angel there, engaged in glorifying and sanctifying Allāh.”[49]

2. They do not eat and drink, and neither do they marry. In a tradition Imām as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام says: The angels do not eat food, do not drink water and do not marry, rather, they stay alive by means of the zephyr of Allāh’s ʿArsh (Throne)!)[50]

[46] *Sūrat Maryam* (19), Verse 17
[47] *Sūrat Hūd* (11), 69, 77
[48] Ibid., Verse 78
[49] *Biḥārul Anwār*, vol. 59, pg. 176, no. 7. There are numerous other traditions too that have been mentioned in this regard.
[50] Ibid., pg. 174, no. 4

3. They are not overcome by sleep, lethargy and heedlessness. Imām ʿAlī ﷺ says: In them there is no lassitude, heedlessness and disobedience. Sleep never prevails over them, their intellects are never overcome by inadvertence and forgetfulness, their bodies never experience lethargy, and they are never ensconced in the loins of fathers and the wombs of mothers.[51]

4. They possess different grades and varied ranks; some are always in a state of rukūʿ while others are perpetually in a state of prostration.

﴿ وَ مَــــا مِنَّا إِلاَّ لَهُ مَقَامٌ مَعْلُومٌ وَ إِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الصَّآفُّونَ وَ إِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الْمُسَــــبِّحُونَ ﴾

"And there is none of us but has an assigned place, and most surely we are they who draw themselves out in ranks, and we are most surely they who declare the glory (of Allāh)."[52]

Imām as-Ṣādiq ﷺ has said: "Allāh possesses certain angels, who are in (a state of) rukūʿ (and shall continue to remain so) until the Day of Judgment, and certain angels, who are in (a state of) sajdah, (and shall continue to remain so) until the Day of Judgment."[53]

(For further information about their characteristics and categories, refer to 'The Chapter of Angels' of the section السَّمَاء وَ الْعَالـــــم of the book Biḥārul Anwār (vol. 59, pp. 144–326) and Nahjul Balāghah, Sermons 1, 91, 109 and 171.)

**Question**

In view of the characteristics that have been mentioned above, are angels corporeal or non-corporeal entities?

Undoubtedly, with the characteristics that they possess, they cannot be constituted of this lowly and elemental matter;

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[51] *Biḥārul Anwār*, vol. 59, pg. 175
[52] *Sūratul Ṣāffāt* (37), Verse 164 – 166
[53] *Biḥārul Anwār*, vol. 59, pg. 174

nevertheless it is possible for them to have been created out of subtle material elements – material elements that are superior to this ordinary matter familiar to us.

Proving absolute immateriality for the angels - immateriality with respect to place, time and parts - is not an easy task and furthermore, research on this subject does not possess that great a benefit. The important thing is that we recognize the angels according to the attributes that have been mentioned by the Qurʾān and the conclusive Islamic traditions, and regard them as a huge assemblage of lofty and preeminent entities of Allāh ﷻ without attributing any status to them except that of servitude and slavery (of Allāh ﷻ) and without regarding them as being partners to Allāh ﷻ in creation and worship, for then this would be downright polytheism and kufr.

In connection with the angels we content ourselves with what has been discussed and leave the details for books, specifically devoted to this topic.

In numerous expressions of the Torah the angels have been referred to as Gods - an expression enshrouded with polytheism and one of the signs of the distortion of the present Torah. But the Noble Qurʾān is pure from such expressions for it does not ascribe to them any rank except that of servitude, worship and execution of Allāh's ﷻ commands. Moreover, as we have previously mentioned, it is apparent from various verses of the Qurʾān that the rank of the Perfect Man is loftier and more exalted than that of the angels.[54]

## 10. What is 'Rajʿat (the Return)? Is its occurrence possible?

Raja't is one of the popular Shīʿite beliefs and its explanation, briefly, is as follows:

After the reappearance of Imām Mahdī عليه السلام and on the threshold of Resurrection, a group of the sincere mu'mineen and a group of the immensely wicked disbelievers and rebellious individuals shall

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[54] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 18, pg. 173

return to this world. The first group shall subsequently advance several ranks towards perfection whilst the second group would taste a severe chastisement.

The late Sayyid Murtaḍā, one of the greatly distinguished scholars, explains as follows: “After the reappearance of Haḍrat Mahdī عليه السلام, the Exalted Allāh shall cause group of those, who had previously departed from the world, to return to this world in order that they may be partners in the reward and glory of assisting him عليه السلام and in witnessing Allāh’s rule over the entire world; He shall also cause the most obstinate enemies to return in order to extract revenge from them.”

He then adds: “No intellectual person can ever claim that Allāh does not possess the power to cause this occurrence to happen and, since this cannot be considered to be impossible, it is itself a proof of the truthfulness of this issue. Nonetheless, our opponents reject this so vehemently as if they regard it to be an event that is inconceivable.”

He then further adds: “The consensus of the Twelve-Imām Shīʿites proves this belief, for there is none, from amongst them, who oppose it.”[55]

Nevertheless, from the statements of some of the scholars and also from the words of late Ṭabrisī in his book Majmaʿul Bayān, it appears that a minority from amongst the Shīʿites had opposed this belief, interpreting Rajʿat to mean the return of the rule and government of the Ahlul Bayt عليهم السلام and not the return of the people and coming to life of the dead. However, they are few in number and accordingly do not injure the consensus.

There are indeed numerous aspects that need to be discussed which we shall present here, in a few words, so as not to deviate from the subject matter:

1. Without any doubt, for a group of dead individuals to come back to life in this world is entirely possible, just as the coming to life of

[55] *Safinatul Biḥār*, vol. 1, pg. 511 (under رجع)

all the humans on the Day of Judgment is entirely possible. Astonishment over such an issue is akin to the disbelief exhibited by the pagan polytheists over the issue of Resurrection, and mockery with respect to this issue is analogous to their mockery. This is because the intellect does not consider such an occurrence to be impossible; indeed the Power of Allāh ﷻ is so extensive and all-embracing that for Him all these issues are simple.

2. In the Noble Qurʾān there are five instances of rajʿat, occurring with respect to past nations:

a. Regarding a prophet, who passed by a settlement which lay in ruins while the bodies of its inhabitants lay scattered. He asked himself as to how Allāh ﷻ would bring them to life after they have died whereupon Allāh ﷻ made him to die for one hundred years and then, bringing him to life, asked: "How long have you tarried? He replied: A day or a part of it. He was told: No. A hundred years have passed by you."[56]

Whether this prophet had been ʿUzayr or someone else does not make a difference. The significant point is the explicit declaration of the Qurʾān about life after death in this world itself.

﴿ فَأَمَاتَهُ اللّٰهُ مِائَةَ عامٍ ثُمَّ بَعَثَهُ ﴾

"So Allāh made him die for a hundred years, then raised him to life."

b. In verse 243 of Sūratul Baqarah, the Qurʾān speaks about a group of individuals, who, out of fear of death (and according to some commentators, under the pretext of plague had refrained from participating in the jihād) had stepped out of their houses, whereupon Allāh ﷻ commanded them to die and then raised them to life again.

﴿ فَقَالَ لَهُمُ اللّٰهُ مُوتُوا ثُمَّ أَحْيَاهُمْ ﴾

"Allāh said to them: 'Die': Then He restored them to life."

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[56] *Sūratul Baqarah* (2), Verse 259

Some commentators, who have been unable to digest the occurrence of such an unusual incident, have regarded it as just a presentation of an example. However, it is plain that such interpretations, vis-à-vis the apparent meaning and the explicit statements of the verse in connection with the occurrence of this issue, are unacceptable.

c. In verses 55 and 56 of Sūratul Baqarah, which are in connection with the tribe of Banī Isrāʾīl, we read that a group from amongst them, desiring to see Allāh ﷻ, were overcome by a deadly lightning and died, after which, Allāh ﷻ brought them back to life in order that they may thank Him for His bounties.

﴿ ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَاكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَوْتِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴾

"Then We raised you up after your death that you may give thanks."

d. Verse 110 of Sūratul Māidah, while enumerating the miracles of Prophet ʿIsā ؑ, states:

﴿ وَ إِذْ تُخْرِجُ الْمَوْتىٰ بِإِذْنِي ﴾

"And when you brought forth the dead by My permission."

This expression indicates that ʿIsā ؑ made use of this miracle (bringing the dead to life) of his; moreover, the imperfect tense of the word تَخرُجُ indicates repetition, which itself can be regarded as a kind of Rajʿat (for those whom he ؑ brought back to life).

e. And finally, in verse 73 of Sūratul Baqarah, when there arose a dispute and disagreement amongst the Banī Isrāʾīl with respect to unearthing the killer of a murdered person, the Qurʾān says that they were ordered to sacrifice a cow possessing certain specific features, and to tap a part of its body upon the body of the murdered person in order that the person may return to life (and disclose the name of his murderer thereby putting an end to the dispute)

﴿ فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبُوهُ بِبَعْضِهَا كَذٰلِكَ يُحْيِ اللّٰهُ الْمَوْتىٰ وَ يُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴾

"So We said: Strike the (dead body) with part of the (sacrificed cow), thus Allāh brings the dead to life, and He shows you His signs so that you may understand."

Apart from these five instances, there are other occasions which are observed in the Noble Qurʾān – such as the story of the People of the Cave which is also something similar to rajʿat, and the story of the four birds of Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ that are brought back to life after being sacrificed in order to demonstrate for him the possibility of the resurrection of man - an incident, which is very significant when discussing rajʿat.

Accordingly, how is it possible that a person accepts the Noble Qurʾān as a Divine book and, despite all these clear verses, suntil denies the possibility of rajʿat? Essentially, is rajʿat something other than a return to life after death?

Can rajʿat not be regarded as a small example of Resurrection, in this small world? How can one, who accepts Resurrection in that extensive scale, reject the issue of rajʿat? Or ridicule its concept? Or speak like Aḥmad Amīn Miṣrī, who, in his book Fajrul Islām, writes:

الْيَهُوْدِيَّةُ ظَهَرَتْ بِالتَّشَيُّعِ بِالْقَوْلِ بِالرَّجْعَةِ.

"Another Judaism has manifested in Shīʿism due to the concept of rajʿat!"[57]

Honestly, what difference lies between this statement of Aḥmad Amīn and the disavowal of physical resurrection by the pagan Arabs?

3. What we have stated up to this point has proved the possibility of the occurrence of rajʿat; and its occurrence is emphasized by

[57] *ʿAqāidul Imāmiyyah* of Sheikh Muḥammad Riḍā Muḍaffar, pg. 71

numerous traditions which have been narrated from the Imāms of the Ahlul Bayt ﷷ, and since it is beyond the scope of our discussion to present them all, it should suffice for us to quote the statistics compiled by the late ʿAllāmah Majlisī, who says:

How is it possible that a person believes in the truthfulness of the words of the Imāms of the Ahlul Bayt ﷷ but (at the same time) refuses to accept the 'successively transmitted' traditions in connection with rajʿat - explicit traditions, which are almost two hundred in number and transmitted by forty odd trustworthy transmitters and eminent scholars in more than fifty books! If these traditions are not 'successively transmitted', then which tradition can be such?[58 and 59]

## 11. What is the philosophy of Rajʿat?

From Islamic traditions, it can be inferred that this issue is confined to those righteous believers, who possess an elevated rank with respect to their faith, and similarly disbelievers, who are placed at a low-grade rank with respect to their disbelief. It appears that the return of these two groups into the world is for the purpose of completing a circle of perfection in the case of the first group and tasting worldly chastisement regarding the second group.

The wisdom of Allāh ﷻ necessitates that the group of sincere believers - who, in their journey towards spiritual perfection, had come across obstructions in their life due to which their development had been left incomplete - continue their journey towards perfection by being brought back into this world. They shall then witness the universal government of truth and justice, and participate in the establishment of this system. This is because participation in the establishment of such a government is one of the greatest distinctions (for man).

[58] *Biḥārul Anwār*, vol. 53, pg. 122
[59] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 15, pg. 555

On the contrary, the group of obstinate tyrants, apart from their special chastisement on the Day of Judgment, should also be punished in this world like the punishment tasted by obstinate nations such as ʿĀd, Thamūd, the people of Firʿawn and Prophet Lūṭ ﷵ, and the only way to accomplish this is by means of rajʿat.

In a tradition, Imām as-Ṣādiq ﷵ says:

إِنَّ الرَّجْعَةَ لَيْسَتْ عَامَّةٌ وَ هِيَ خَاصَّةٌ، لاَ يَرْجِعُ إِلاَّ مَنْ مَحَّضَ الْإِيمَانَ مَحْضاً أَوْ مَحَّضَ الشِّرْكَ مَحْضاً.

"Surely the rajʿat is not universal, but specific; only those shall be returned, who are downright pure in faith or downright pure in polytheism."[60]

It is possible that verse 95 of Sūratul Anbiyā, which states:

﴿ وَ حَرَامٌ عَلىٰ قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا إِنَّهُمْ لاَ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴾

"And it is binding on a town which We destroy that they shall not return)" is also an allusion towards this meaning. This is because the issue of non-return is stated in connection with those, who have tasted their punishments in this world; thus, it becomes manifest that those, who have not witnessed their punishments, ought to return and taste it.

Another possibility that exists is that the return of these two groups in that specific phase of human history is to present before mankind two important signs – the power of Allāh ﷻ and the issue of Resurrection (the Origin and the End) – in order that by witnessing it they reach the zenith of their faith and spiritual perfection, and do not possess any kind of shortcoming. [61]

[60] *Biḥārul Anwār*, vol. 53, pg. 39
[61] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 15, pg. 559

## 12. What is the reality of Tawakkul[62] and what is its philosophy?

The word tawakkul has been derived from وكالت (wakālat), meaning 'taking for oneself a representative', and a good representative generally possesses the following four characteristics: Awareness, Trustworthiness, Strength and Sympathy.

It might not appear necessary to mention that one selects a barrister for a task when the individual lacks the strength to defend himself. He therefore seeks the strength of another person and uses his assistance to solve his personal problem.

Accordingly tawakkul means that man, in the face of the difficulties of life, enmity and troubles of opponents, the tangles of existence which hinder his journey towards his objectives, and in instances wherein he finds himself unable to untie the knots, takes Allāh ﷻ as his support but, at the same time, does not stop his own efforts and endeavours. Rather, in those instances too, wherein he possesses the strength to perform the work, he looks upon Allāh ﷻ as the fundamental influencing force. This is because in the eyes of a (true) monotheist, He is the source of all strength and power.

Contrary to the attribute of 'relying on Allāh ﷻ' is 'relying on other than Him' - meaning living dependently upon someone else and not possessing self independence.

Scholars of ethics state: Tawakkul is the direct outcome of 'Unity of Divine acts'; this is because, as we have mentioned previously, in the eyes of a monotheist every motion, endeavour, movement and occurrence that takes place in this world eventually finds a connection with the Primary Cause of this world i.e. Allāh ﷻ; consequently, a monotheist regards every strength and power to originate from Him.

### THE PHILOSOPHY OF 'TAWAKKUL'

In the light of our previous statements, it can be inferred that:

[62] Relying on Allāh (Tr.)

Firstly: Relying on Allāh ﷻ - the interminable Source of power and strength - causes man to become more resilient in the face of the troubles and adversities of life. An example of this is when the Muslims suffered a severe blow in the battle of Uhud and the enemies, after having abandoned the battlefield, decided to return once again midway from their journey (back home) with the aim of inflicting a final blow upon the Muslims. The Qurʾān states that when the Muslims were informed of this, those who possessed firm faith were untouched by fright in this extremely dangerous moment when they had lost most of their active forces. On the contrary, placing their reliance on Allāh ﷻ and seeking assistance from the power of faith, they increased themselves in firmness and resistance. As a result the victorious enemies, being informed of this, hastily retraced their advance.[63]

Examples of such resistance, under the light of tawakkul, are observed in numerous verses, amongst them being verse 122 of Sūrat Āle ʿImrān, in which the Qurʾān says that reliance on Allāh prevented the two groups of soldiers from being overcome with lassitude, in the battlefield.

In verse 12 of Sūrat Ibrāhīm it has been mentioned that tawakkul should be accompanied by patience in the face of the attacks of the enemy.

In verse 159 of Sūrat Āle ʿImrān it has been ordered that when intending to perform an important task, initially consultation should take place; this should be followed up by a firm decision after which, one should place one's reliance on Allāh (and proceed in accordance with the decision taken).

The Qurʾān even says that only those, who possess faith and tawakkul, shall be able to exhibit resistance vis-à-vis satanic whisperings and not be influenced by them.

[63] *Sūrat Āle ʿImrān* (3), Verse 173

﴿ إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطَانٌ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَ عَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴾

"Surely he has no authority over those who believe and rely on their Lord."[64]

From the entire collection of these verses it can be concluded that tawakkul means that man, in the face of problems, does not experience a feeling of weakness and inferiority, but instead considers himself victorious by relying on the infinite power of Allāh ﷻ. Thus, tawakkul is a hope-inspiring, energy-insuntiling and reinforcing factor which increases perseverance and resistance.

If the concept of tawakkul meant taking to a corner and sitting idle, it would be meaningless to attribute it to the soldiers and the likes of them.

And if some believe that resorting to various means and natural factors is not in conformity with the spirit of tawakkul, they are mistaken. This is because endeavouring to separate the effects of natural causes from the Will of Allāh ﷻ is a kind of polytheism. But is it not a fact that whatever the natural causes possess is from Him alone? And is it not that everything is in accordance with His Will and command? Yes, if we were to regard the causes and means to be an independent apparatus as opposed to Allāh's Will, this would be incompatible with the spirit of tawakkul. (Do note).

How is it possible to interpret tawakkul in this manner when the Noble Prophet ﷺ, the leader of those who exhibited tawakkul, had never been heedless of utilizing every opportunity, appropriate plan and other exterior means for furthering his aims and objectives; all these only go to prove that the meaning of tawakkul does not have that negative dimension attached to it at all.

Secondly: Relying on Allāh ﷻ delivers man from being dependent (on others) – a state, which is the source of humiliation - and imparts freedom and self-confidence to him.

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[64] *Sūratul Naḥl* (16), Verse 99

At this point we present some of the traditions in connection with tawakkul for the purpose of illuminating its actual meaning.

Imām as-Ṣādiq ﵇ says:

إِنَّ الْغِنَى وَ الْعِزَّ يَجُولاَنِ فَإِذَا ظَفِرَا بِمَوْضِعِ التَّوَكُّلِ أَوْطَنَا.

"Verily, independence and honour are in (a state of) travel and when they come to the place of 'tawakkul' they take up residence there."[65]

In this tradition, tawakkul has been presented as being the actual dwelling place of independence and honour.

It has been narrated that the Noble Prophet ﷺ said: I asked Jibraīl: "What is 'tawakkul'?" He replied: "Cognizance (of the fact) that the creation (of Allāh) can neither cause harm nor yield benefit; neither can it grant nor withhold (a bounty); (one must) sever all expectations from the creation (of Allāh). When a person becomes such, he shall never work for anyone other than Allāh and shall never hope and expect from anyone other than Him, and this is the reality of 'tawakkul'.[66]

Once someone questioned Imām ʿAlī ibne Mūsā al-Riḍā ﵇[67]:

مَا حَدُّ التَّوَكُّلِ؟ فَقَالَ أَنْ لاَ تَخَافَ مَعَ اللّٰهِ أَحَداً.

"What is the extent of 'tawakkul'? He ﵇ replied: That you do not fear anyone once you have relied on Allāh!"[68 and 69]

[65] *al-Kāfī*, vol. 2, Chapter al-Tafwīḍ Ilallāh Wa al-Tawakkul ʿAlaihī, no. 3

[66] *Biḥārul Anwār*, vol. 15, Part 2 Fī al-Akhlāq, pg. 14 (Old Publication)

[67] *Safīnatul Biḥār*, vol. 2, pg. 682

[68] For more explanations in connection 'tawakkul' and other such issues, refer the book *Angīzah-e-Paidāish-e-Madhhab.*

[69] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 10, pg. 295

## 13. What is the philosophy behind Duʿā and Invocations?

Those, who have not comprehended the reality of duʿā, and its educative and psychological effects, have levelled various objections against it:

At times they say: Duʿā brings about a state of narcosis within people for, instead of exhorting them towards effort and utilization of advanced means, it directs them towards supplications and teaches them that they should pray, rather than exert themselves!

And occasionally they say: Basically, is supplicating not interference in Allāh's ﷻ work? Allāh ﷻ performs whatever He deems to be the best; He loves us and knows better than us what is best for us and so, why should we seek things from Him at times as we please?

At other times they say: Apart from all these, does duʿā not conflict with the attribute of riḍa[70] and taslīm[71]?

Those who propound these objections are oblivious of the psychological, social, educative and spiritual effects of supplication. This is because man, in order to strengthen his determination, and eliminate his distresses, is occasionally in need of a support, and it is the duʿā that lights up the lamp of hope within him.

People, who neglect duʿā and supplication, shall eventually face undesirable social and psychological effects in the long run.

In the words of a well-known psychologist: "Absence of invocations amongst a nation is equivalent to the collapse of that nation! A society that has strangulated within itself the need for invocations is usually not safeguarded from degradation and degeneration. Of course, it should not be forgotten that invocating only in the mornings while passing the entire day akin to barbarians, is futile; supplications ought to be performed continuously and in every

[70] Satisfaction and pleasure over divine decree. (Tr.)
[71] Submission to Allāh ﷻ. (Tr.)

state, and care should be taken to ensure that its profound influence upon man is not lost.”[72]

Those, who claim that duʿā possesses a narcotic effect, have failed to comprehend the meaning of duʿā. Supplicating to Allāh ﷻ does not mean that we withdraw ourselves from all the natural means that lie at our disposal and instead, raise our hands and set about praying; rather, it means that after utilizing all the means available before us to the best of our abilities and if we fall short, we resort to duʿā and, by turning towards and leaning on Allāh ﷻ, we invigorate within ourselves the spirit of hope, seeking succour from the unfailing assistance of the Great Origin.

Accordingly duʿā is confined to inadequacies and dead-ends, and not a means that acts as a substitute for natural factors.

Although invocations induce serenity, at the same time, they also stimulate a kind of amazement and internal expansion with respect to cerebral activities, and occasionally also inspire a spirit of courageousness and heroism within man. Invocations make manifest our excellences with unique indications – pure look, composed behaviour, internal expansion and happiness, firm conviction, ability to accept guidance and confront the adversities. These are the things that indicate upon the existence of a concealed treasure deep within us, and by means of this strength, even those who are backward and less capable can better utilize their mental and ethical abilities, and derive greater benefits. However, it is rather unfortunate that in our present world, those who can comprehend (the concept of) supplication correctly are very few indeed.[73]

From what we have stated above, the answer to the objection that the concept of duʿā is inconsistent with riḍā and taslīm also becomes clear. This is because duʿā, as has been explained above, is a kind of

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[72] *Niyāyish* – a Persian translation of a book written by the well-known doctor and psychologist Alexis Carrol.

[73] As written by Alexis Carrol.

quest for the ability to acquire a greater share of the infinite grace and blessings of Allāh ﷻ.

In other words man, by means of duʿā, develops within himself a great worthiness for acquiring increased blessings of Allāh ﷻ, and it is self-evident that exertion towards perfection is, in reality, taslīm in the face of the laws of creation and not something in contrast to it.

Additionally, duʿā is a kind of worship, (and an exhibition of) servitude, and by means of it man achieves a fresh attentiveness towards Allāh ﷻ. Therefore, just as all the other acts of worship possess an educative influence, duʿā too possesses such an influence.

And when they say that duʿā is interference in Allāh's ﷻ work! Allāh ﷻ does whatever is advisable and prudent, they have overlooked the fact that distribution of Allāh's ﷻ bounties is dictated by capability - the greater the capacity, the greater shall be the share of the Divine gifts that shall come a person's way.

And it is for this reason that Imām as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام has said:

إِنَّ عِندَ اللّٰهِ مَنْزِلَةً لاَ تُـــنَالُ إِلاَّ بِمَسْأَلَةٍ.

"Allāh has ordained ranks, which cannot be achieved except by means of supplication."[74]

A scholar has stated: "When we supplicate, we link and associate ourselves to the infinite Power, Who has interconnected the entire universe."[75]

He also states: "Today, the most recent science, i.e. psychiatry, teaches the same things that the prophets used to teach. Why? The reason being that psychiatrists have discovered that duʿā, prayers and possessing a firm conviction with respect to religion eliminates

[74] *al-Kāfī*, vol. 2, pg. 338, Chapter Fadhl al-Duʿā Wa al-Haththu ʿAlaihī, no. 3
[75] *Aaīn-e-Zindagī*, pg. 156

worries, anxieties, agitations and fear – factors that are cause for more than half of our inconveniences."[76 and 77]

## 14. Why is it that our supplications occasionally remain unanswered?

Attention towards the conditions for the acceptance of prayers reveals new realities in the issue of duʿā, and manifests its constructive influence. In the Islamic traditions, some of the conditions (to be taken into regard) for the purpose of acceptance of one's prayers are as follows:

In order to have the prayers answered, first of all one should strive for the purification of the mind and soul, be repentant over (past) sins, embark upon development of the self and seek inspiration from the lives of divine leaders.

It has been reported that Imām as-Ṣādiq ﵇ said: Let it never be that any of you seeks a thing from Allāh except that he first praises and glorifies Him, sends salutations upon the Noble Prophet ﷺ and his holy progeny, confesses to his sins and exhibits repentance over them; after having done these, he should then seek his desire from Him.[78]

Endeavouring to have a pure life, free from usurped riches, oppression and injustice, and to refrain from acquiring one's livelihood by illegal means.

It has been reported that the Noble Prophet ﷺ said:

مَنْ أَحَبَّ أَنْ يُسْتَجَابَ دُعَاؤُهُ فَلْيُطَيِّبْ مَطْعَمَهُ وَ مَكْسَبَهُ.

"One who desires to have his supplications answered, should purify his food and earnings."[79]

[76] Ibid., pg. 152
[77] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 1, pg. 639
[78] *Safīnatul Biḥār*, vol. 1, pg. 448, 449
[79] Ibid.

One should not desist from combating evil and inviting others towards Allāh ﷻ.

This is because the supplications of those, who forsake 'enjoining the good and forbidding the evil', are not answered. The Noble Prophet ﷺ has said: "You must enjoin the good and forbid the evil or else Allāh will cause the evil ones to prevail over the righteous ones from amongst you, and however much they may pray, (their prayers) shall not be answered!"[80]

In fact, abandoning this great duty of 'national supervision' leads to turmoil within the society as a result of which the society would be left open for the evil ones; (when this happens) supplications for the elimination of the consequences arising out of this state would be futile since this state has resulted out of man's own deeds.

## ACTING IN ACCORDANCE WITH DIVINE COVENANTS

Faith, good deeds, trustworthiness, and righteousness, (collectively) form another of the conditions for the acceptance of prayers. This is because one who is not faithful to his pledge with respect to Allāh ﷻ, should likewise not expect Allāh's ﷻ promise of answering a supplicant to be true for him too.

A person once, complaining to the Commander of the Faithful عليه السلام about his prayers not being answered, said: Despite the fact that Allāh has said "Call upon Me, I will answer you", why is it that when we supplicate to him, He does not answer our prayers?

The Imām عليه السلام replied:

إِنَّ قُلُوبَكُمْ خَانَ بِثَمٰنِيَةِ خِصَالٍ.

"Your hearts (and thoughts) have been unfaithful with respect to eight things (and this is the reason your prayers go unanswered)."

[80] Ibid.

1. You have acquired the cognizance of Allāh ﷻ but you do not fulfill what is due to Him; consequently your cognizance of Him has not benefited your state!

2. You have brought faith upon His Messenger but (later) went on to oppose his customs; where then is the yield of your faith?

3. You have read His book but have not acted upon it; you stated: "We have heard and we obey", but then rose up in opposition to it!

4. You say: "We fear Allāh's punishment", but perpetually perform acts that lead you closer to it.

5. You claim to be covetous of Allāh's reward however you continue to perform acts that lead you away from it.

6. You consume Allāh's bounties but do not extend thanksgivings to Him.

7. You have been ordered to be Shayṭān's enemy (whereas you sketch plans to befriend him); you claim to be his enemy but, in practice, you do not oppose him.

8. You place into great scrutiny the faults of others but conveniently disregard your own; with such a state of affairs, how do you expect your prayers to be answered when you yourself have shut its doors? Be pious, rectify your deeds and enjoin the good and forbid the evil so that your prayers are answered."[81]

This meaningful tradition explicitly states: "Allāh's promise to answer the invocations of a supplicant is not absolute, but conditional - the condition being that you should fulfill your own pledges and covenants; however the reality is that you have broken your pledge in eight ways. If you were to put an end to these, your prayers would be answered."

Another condition for the acceptance of one's prayers is to adjoin it with efforts and hard work. In one of the short sayings of the Commander of the Faithful عليه السلام we read:

[81] *Safīnatul Biḥār*, vol. 1, pg. 448

أَلدَّاعِي بِلاَ عَمَلٍ كَالرَّامِي بِلاَ وَتَرٍ.

“A supplicant (who prays) without effort and endeavour is like an archer without a bowstring!”[82]

In view of the fact that the bowstring is a means to propel the arrow towards the target, the influence of ‘effort’ in the effectiveness of duʿā becomes evident.

The above five conditions are illustrative of the reality that not only should duʿā not become a substitute for the natural means and ordinary measures with the purpose of achieving an objective but rather, in order for it to be answered, there ought to occur a complete transformation in the life of the supplicant - his outlook ought to be overhauled and his past deeds reviewed.

In view of the above, does it not appear that characterizing duʿā as being narcotic and soporific indicates either a lack of knowledge or a sinister motive?[83]

## 15. What is Islam’s perspective with regards to Jabr (compulsion) and Ikhtiyār (free-choice)?

This problem is an ancient issue that had been the bone of contention of scholars; a group advocating freedom of will while another supporting compulsion and each of them presenting proofs to substantiate their viewpoints.

But interestingly, in practice, both these groups have formally recognized and accepted the notion of choice and freedom of will. In other words all these debates are only within the periphery of theoretical discussion and not in practice, clearly revealing that the concept of freedom of will is inherent to every person. And were it not for the various insinuations and whisperings, everybody would have supported this concept.

[82] *Nahjul Balāgha*, Short Sayings 337

[83] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 1, pg. 643

This general conscience and universal innate - one of the most lucid of all the proofs for ikhtiyār (freedom of choice) - manifests itself in various forms in man's life; if man considered himself to be compelled in the performance of his deeds and to not possess any choice, why is it that: At times, as a result of performance or non-performance of an act, man experiences a sense of regret, and resolves to utilize his experience in the future. This state of regret occurs numerously for those who advocate the concept of jabr (compulsion); if there is no ikhtiyār, why this rue and remorse?

Everyone rebukes and censures the evil-doers; if there is jabr, why should they be rebuked in such a manner?

Those who do good deeds are praised and commended?

Everyone strives to educate their children in order that they become successful and fortunate; if everyone is compelled (in the performance of his deeds); what is the point in educating them?

All the scholars, without exception, exert themselves for the purpose of raising the standard of ethics in society?

Man expresses repentance over his blunders; if the concept of jabr is accepted, repentance becomes meaningless.

Man rues his shortcomings; why?

Universally, the criminals are subjected to trials and are exposed to intense interrogation; are these acts that are beyond one's choice and free-will and need no interrogation and trials?

All over the world and within all communities - irrespective of whether they are materialists or Allāh-worshippers - punishments have been prescribed for the criminals. But are these punishments for acts that they were compelled to perform?!

When someone transgresses upon their interests, even the advocates of the doctrine of jabr clamour for justice and, considering him to be guilty, drag him to the courts of law!

In short, if man truly had no choice of his own, what could repentance possibly mean? Why then the reproach and censure? Can one, whose hands and feet tremble involuntarily, be rebuked and criticized?

Why are those, who perform good acts, praised and encouraged? But do they possess choice of their own that they shall continue their good acts as a result of this encouragement?

Basically, with the acknowledgement of the influence of education, the concept of jabr breaks down. In addition, issues related to ethics, without acknowledging the concept of freedom of will, become totally meaningless.

If we are compelled in our acts, what is the meaning of repentance? Why should one yearn and rue? Placing a compelled person on trial is one of the most oppressive of acts, and punishing him is worse.

All these indicate that the concept of freedom of will is inherent to all humans, and in accordance with the conscience of the entire mankind. It is not just the general public, but even the learned class, the philosophers and the proponents of jabr too, in practice, accept ikhtiyār.

الْجَبَرِيُّونَ اخْتِيَارِيُّونَ مِنْ حَيْثُ لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ!

"Those, who profess the doctrine of 'jabr' are, (in practice) the proponents of the doctrine of 'ikhtiyār', but only they realize it not."

It is interesting to note that the Noble Qurʾān has repeatedly emphasized this issue too. In verse 39 of Sūratul Nabā it says:

﴿ فَمَنْ شَآءَ اتَّخَذَ إِلَى رَبِّهِ مَآباً ﴾

"So whoever desires may take refuge with his Lord."

In other verses too great emphasis has been laid upon man's will, and since mentioning all of them would only serve to prolong the

discussion, we shall content ourselves by presenting only two verses below:

﴿ إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِراً وَ إِمَّا كَفُوراً ﴾

“Surely We have shown him the way: he may be thankful or unthankful.”[84]

﴿ فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَ مَنْ شَآءَ فَلْيَكْفُرْ إِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ نَارًا ﴾

“So let him who please believe, and let him who please disbelieve; surely We have prepared for the iniquitous a fire.”[85]

The discussion regarding this issue is a very protracted one with numerous books and articles having been written in this regard. What has been mentioned has just been a superficial glance at the issue from the standpoint of the conscience and the Noble Qurʾān. We continue our discussion by mentioning one important point:

Support for the issue of jabr, on the part of a group of people, did not arise only due to philosophical problems; rather, important psychological and social factors undoubtedly contributed to the birth and continuation of this belief.

Many of those, who have accepted the belief of jabr, predestination or ‘qaḍa and qadr’ (fate and destiny, but with the attribute of compulsion attached to them), have done so in order to escape the burden of responsibilities or to cover up their failures, which have been a consequence of their own shortcomings and negligence, or to provide for themselves a covering for their wild carnal desires (They would state: Allāh ﷻ knew from pre-eternity that we would consume wine; and we consume wine now in order that Allāh’s ﷻ knowledge does not become ignorance!)

At times the colonialist powers, in order to suppress the resistance of the people and put out the flames of anger of the nations, would

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[84] *Sūratul Insān* (76), Verse 3
[85] *Sūratul Kahf* (18), Verse 29

make themselves dominant over the others by making use of this doctrine. They used to say: 'Your fate, from the very beginning, had been ordained to be this; where is there any alternative except submission and happiness (over our dominance)?

By accepting this doctrine all the deeds of the criminals and the sins of the sinners would become justified and there would be no difference between an offender and an obedient person.[86]

The verse:

﴿ وَ مَا رَبُّكَ بِظَلاَّمٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ ﴾

"And your Lord is not in the least unjust to the servants"[87]

is a clear proof with regards to the issue of ikhtiyār and freedom of will, and is illustrative of this reality that Allāh ﷻ neither punishes anyone inexplicably nor does He increase the punishment of anyone unwarrantedly. His work is absolute justice; this is so since oppression stems from shortcomings, deficiencies, ignorance, unawareness or carnal desires, and His Holy Essence is free from all of these.

Qurʾān, in its manifest verses, simultaneous to pronouncing the doctrine of jabr - which is a source of dissemination of wickedness, an approval for various kinds of evils, and a tool for the rejection of every kind of obligation and responsibility - as being incorrect, considers each person to be answerable for his own deeds and is of the view that the consequences of every person's deeds would be directed towards that person himself.

And hence we read in a tradition that one of companions Imām ʿAlī ibne Mūsā al-Riḍā (عليه السلام) asked:

هَلْ يَجْبُرُ اللّٰهُ عِبَادَهُ عَلىٰ الْـــمَعَاصِي؟

"Does Allāh compel His servants to commit sins?"

[86] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 26, pg. 64

[87] *Sūratul Fuṣṣilat* (41), Verse 46

فَقَالَ: بَلْ يُخَيِّرُهُمْ وَ يُمَهِّلُهُمْ حَتَّى يَتُوبُوا.

Whereupon he ﷺ replied: "No. Rather, he gives them the choice and respites them until they repent."

The companion persisted:

فَهَلْ يُكَلِّفُ عِبَادَهُ مَا لاَ يَطِيقُونَ؟

"Does He place upon them obligations that are beyond their ability to perform?"

The Imām ﷺ said:

كَيْفَ يَفْعَلُ ذٰلِكَ وَ هُوَ يَقُولُ: ﴿ وَ مَا رَبُّكَ بِظَلاَّمٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ ﴾

"How can He do such a thing when He Himself has said (in the Qurʾān) 'And your Lord is not in the least unjust to the servants?'"

The Imām ﷺ then adds: My father Mūsā ibne Jaʿfar ﷺ narrates from his father Jaʿfar ibne Muḥammad ﷺ that: "One, who is of the belief that Allāh compels His servants into committing sins or places upon them obligations that are beyond their ability (to perform), do not eat the meat of the animal slaughtered by such a person, do not accept his testimony, do not offer prayers behind him and do not give him anything from the zakāt! (In short, do not apply the laws of Islam to him).[88]

The above tradition implicitly alludes to this subtle point that the doctrine of jabr originates from the concept of 'obligation that cannot be performed'; this is because if, on the one hand, man is compelled into committing sins while on the other hand, he is prohibited from it, this becomes a clear case of placing an obligation that cannot to be performed.[89]

In verse 29 of Sūratul Insān, we recite:

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[88] *ʿUyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā*, as quoted in *Tafsīr Nūrul Thaqalaīn*, vol. 4, pg. 555

[89] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 20, pg. 308

﴿ إِنَّ هٰذِهِ تَذْكِرَةٌ فَمَنْ شَآءَ اتَّخَذَ إِلَـــىٰ رَبِّهِ سَبِيلاً ﴾

"Surely this is a reminder, so whoever pleases takes to his Lord a way."

And since it was possible that narrow-minded individuals might have interpreted the above expression to mean absolute and unqualified tafwīḍ (entrusting to Allāh), the next verse goes on to say:

﴿ وَ مَا تَشَآؤُوْنَ إِلاَّ أَنْ يَشَآءَ اللّٰهُ ﴾

"And you do not please except that Allāh please."

And finally says:

﴿ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ عَلِيماً حَكِيماً ﴾

"Surely Allāh is Knowing, Wise."

And this, in reality, is establishing the well-known belief of:

أَلأَمْرُ بَيْنَ الأَمْرَينِ.

"The (actual) issue is that which lies between the two (extreme) issues of total compulsion and total freedom."

On the one hand it says: "Allāh ﷻ has shown the way and selecting it is upon you. On the other hand it adds: Your selection is dependent upon the Will of Allāh ﷻ. This means that you do not possess absolute freedom and independence; rather, your strength, power and freedom of will are entirely from Allāh ﷻ and by His Will and permission; the moment He desires, He can take away this strength and freedom from you."

As such, neither is it tafwīḍ and unqualified entrusting, nor is it compulsion; rather, it is a subtle reality that lies between these two. In other words it is a kind of freedom, which is related to Allāh's ﷻ Will such that He can take it away as and when He desires so that the people can carry the burden of responsibility - which is actually

the secret of their achieving perfection - upon their shoulders, while at the same time, not envisage themselves as being independent of Allāh ﷻ.

In short, this expression is for the purpose that the people do not regard themselves as being independent of the guidance, support, grace and blessings of Allāh ﷻ but, during decision-making, entrust themselves to Him and place themselves under His support,.

It thus becomes clear that the reason some of the commentators, who advocate the doctrine of jabr - like Fakhr Rāzī - have adhered to this verse is due to the preconceived views which they had harboured in connection with the issue. Fakhr Rāzī says:

وَ اعْلَمْ إِنَّ هَذِهِ الْآيَةَ مِنْ جُمْلَةِ الآيَاتِ الَّتِيْ تَلاَطَمَتْ فِيْهَا أَمْوَاجُ الْجَبْرِ وَ الْقَدْرِ.

"Do know that this verse is one of the verses which indicate upon 'jabr' and predestination!"[90]

Yes, if we were to extricate this verse from the verses previous to it, there would be room for this delusion; however, in view of the fact that in one verse the effect of ikhtiyār has been mentioned while in the other verse the effect of Allāh's Will, the issue of:

أَلأَمْرُ بَيْنَ الأَمْرَينِ.

is quite plainly established.

Incredibly, the advocates of tafwīḍ cling on to that very verse, which speaks of total freedom of choice whereas the proponents of jabr adhere to that very verse, which speaks only of jabr - each of them wanting to justify their preconceived opinions by means of the respective verses. However, the correct comprehension of Allāh's ﷻ speech (or any other speech for that matter) demands that all the verses be placed alongside each other and then, without prejudices and prejudgments, the judgment should take place.

It is likely that the last part of the verse which states....

[90] Commentary of Fakhr Rāzī, vol. 30, pg. 262

﴿ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ عَلِيماً حَكِيماً ﴾

"Surely Allāh is Knowing, Wise."

also alludes to this meaning. This is because the Knowledge and Wisdom of Allāh ﷻ necessitate that the people be left free in journeying the path towards perfection; for if it were not so, the perfection that is imposed would not be perfection at all. Besides, His knowledge and wisdom does not permit Him to compel some into performing good deeds and others into committing evil acts, and later reward the first group and punish the second.[91]

## 16. Is the theory of evolution inconsistent with theism?

The Qurʾān contains a concise discussion in connection with the creation of man which it has presented in a nutshell since its prime aim had been issues that were educative in essence. This topic has been presented in numerous places in the Qurʾān such as Sūratul Sajdah, Sūratul Muʾminūn, Sūrat Ṣād and some other chapters.

However, we do know that the Qurʾān is not a book of natural sciences but rather, a book for human development, and hence it should not be expected that details of these sciences such as issues relating to evolution, anatomy, embryology, botany and the like should be contained within it; nevertheless, it is quite acceptable that in relevance to educative discussions, brief allusions are made to different aspects of these sciences in the Qurʾān.

Having taking this into consideration, there are two discussions which we consider essential to present before you:

1. Evolution of species from the scientific point of view.

2. Evolution of species from the Qurʾānic point of view.

At the outset, we shall pursue the first topic and discuss the issue without reference to the verses and the traditions, only taking into consideration the criteria associated with the natural sciences:

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[91] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 25, pg. 385

We know that amongst scholars in this field there are two theories that are prevalent in connection with the creation of the living entities, irrespective of whether they are plants or animals:

The theory of evolution, which states that in the beginning, the various living entities did not possess the form that they presently possess, rather, the beginning of entities started with a single cell, which came into being as a result of mutation amid mud and slime, in the depths of the oceans; some non-living entities found themselves in special conditions and from them came into existence the first living cells.

These microscopic entities gradually underwent evolution - changing forms from one species to another, and shifting from the seas to the wild and from there to the air - and in this fashion, various species of plants, land and sea animals, and birds came into existence.

The most perfect and complete link in this process of evolution are the humans of today, who have manifested themselves in this present form - (evolving) initially from entities that resembled the monkeys and then from monkeys that resembled humans.

The theory of constancy of species, which states that every species of animal, from the very onset, manifested separately in the same form that they presently possess and there has occurred no transformation of any species into another. And hence, quite naturally, man too possessed an independent creation and from the very beginning had been created in this form.

Scholars of both the groups have written numerous books trying to establish their viewpoint, and this issue has been a subject of great dispute in scholastic circles.

These battles intensified from the time of Lamarck (the renowned French zoologist, who lived in the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century) and later Darwin - the English

zoologist who, in the 19th century, presented his views in connection with the evolution of species with fresh proofs and arguments.

However, there is no doubt that in circles of natural sciences, most of the scholars today support the theory of evolution.

## ARGUMENTS OF THE PROPONENTS OF EVOLUTION

Their arguments can be summarized into three kinds:

The first of their claims is related to paleontology – the study of fossils of erstwhile living animals. They are of the opinion that studies conducted in connection with the various layers of earth reveal that living entities changed their forms from simple to more intricate and perfect forms, and there is only one way to explain these variations in the fossils – and that is the theory of evolution.

Their second argument is a clue which they have collected from comparative anatomy. In the course of lengthy discussions, they state: When the frame-work of various dissected animals are placed for comparison, great resemblances are seen to exist between them, which indicates that all of them have been derived from one origin and source.

And finally, their third argument is based upon a finding that they have procured from embryology. They are of the opinion that if the animals, while they are suntil embryos within the mother or inside the egg and have not seen the necessary development stages, are placed alongside each other, they shall be observed to possess great resemblances amongst themselves. This fact also emphasizes that in the beginning all of them come from one source and origin.

## ANSWERS OF THE ADVOCATES OF 'CONSTANCY OF SPECIES'

However, the supporters of the theory of 'constancy of species' state one general answer for all the above statements and that is:

None of the above arguments are convincing. Of course, it cannot be denied the each of the above three claims do justify the probability

of evolution as a conjectural probability, however, they can never induce certainty and conviction within us with respect to this issue.

To put it clearly, proving the theory of evolution and converting it from a mere theory into an indisputable scientific law should either take place by means of rational proof or by means of sense, tests and experiments - there exists no third alternative.

However, on the one hand we do know that there is no room for rational proofs with respect to such issues, while on the other, experimenting in connection with issues, whose roots exist millions of years in the past, is something that is not feasible!

What we perceive by means of sense and experiments is that with the passage of time, as a result of mutation, superficial changes do take place within animals and plants. For example, from one breed of ordinary sheep suddenly a breed of sheep is born whose wool, in terms of softness and delicacy, varies greatly from that of ordinary sheep – this being the origin of a new breed of sheep by the name of merino, possessing these exceptional characteristics in their wool.

Or animals, as a result of mutation, develop a change in the colour of the eyes, nails or the structure of their skin – and other such changes.

However, as yet, no one has ever witnessed a mutation that has caused an important alteration in the essential organs of the body of an animal, or transformed one species into another.

Thus, we can only speculate that successive mutations could, one day, possibly cause a change in the species of animals and, for example, transform a reptile into a bird. Nevertheless, this speculation is not a conclusive supposition but only one conjectural issue. This is because we have never encountered - neither by our sense nor by experiments – mutations that alter the essential organs of the body.

From what has been stated above we conclude that the triple arguments propounded by the advocates of evolution cannot carry

this theory beyond its theoretical concept, and it is for this reason that those who discuss these issues always refer to it as 'theory' of evolution of species, and never refer to it as a law or a rule.

## THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION AND 'THEISM'

Many people claim that this theory is inconsistent with theism and God-worship, and probably, from one angle, there might be some truth in what they claim. This is because, with the advent of Darwinism, there commenced an intense battle between the Church on the one hand and the supporters of this theory on the other, and due to political and social reasons a wide-spread propaganda was initiated stating that Darwinism was not consistent with theism.

However, today, it is clear for us that there exists no inconsistency between them, i.e. irrespective of whether we accept the theory of evolution or reject it due to lack of proof, we can suntil be believers in God.

Even if we assume that the Theory of Evolution of Species is established, all it would do is to take the form of a scientific rule that has manifested for us a natural cause and effect phenomenon – one, which shall be no different from the cause-effect relationship existing in the animal world and between other entities. Are the discoveries of natural causes that lead to rainfall, the tides of the seas, or the earthquakes an impediment in acquiring awareness of God? Surely not! Similarly, the discovery of an evolutionary relationship between the various species does not create any obstacle in the way of developing the cognizance of God.

Only those, who imagined that the discovery of natural causes does not run in harmony with the belief in the existence of God, can state such things. Today, however, we comprehend that not only do the discoveries of these causes not harm monotheism and Unity (of Allāh ﷻ), but instead, they provide us with fresh proofs (related to the system of creation), regarding the existence of God.

Interestingly, Darwin himself, in the face of allegations of heresy, explicitly expresses in his book On The Origin of Species that 'As I accept the (theory of) evolution of species, I also believe in God; fundamentally, justifying and explaining evolution is not possible without (first) acknowledging the existence of God.'

Reflect on this statement: Despite acknowledging the influence of natural causes for the manifestation of various species of animals, he continued to believe in the One God, and gradually, as he grew older, the intensity of a special internal feeling that perceived the presence of a superhuman Power increased to such an extent within him that he realized that the conundrum of creation would remain unfathomable for man.[92]

Essentially, he was of the opinion that the manner in which the species are guided and led through the strange twists of evolution and the transformation of an extremely simple living entity into all these various and different species of animals, without the existence of a calculated plan, and without the means of a Universal Intelligence, is impossible!

And truly, it is exactly so! Is it possible to bring forth from one single, extremely primitive substance all these strange and mind-boggling derivatives - each of which portray extensive organization - without resorting to a source of infinite Knowledge and Power?

In conclusion: The uproar that the Theory of Evolution is in disagreement with the issue of theism and God-worship is one which is baseless and unsubstantiated (irrespective of whether we accept the Theory of Evolution or not).

The only question that remains to be answered is: Is the theory of Evolution of Species in conflict with the history that the Noble Qurʾān presents in connection with the creation of Ādam عليه السلام? The answer to this shall be discussed in the next question.[93]

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[92] *Darwinism*, written by Maḥmūd Behzād, pg. 75, 76
[93] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 11, pg. 81

## 17. Is the theory of evolution of species inconsistent with the viewpoint of the Noble Qur'ān with regards to the creation of Prophet Ādam ﷷ?

Interestingly the supporters of the theory of Evolution of Species, as well as those from amongst the Muslims who oppose it, have sought to adhere to the Qur'ān to prove their stances. However, probably being influenced by their own beliefs, some have sought to base their arguments on verses which do not have a complete bearing on their views. Accordingly, we shall select, from both the sides, only those verses which can be placed under discussion with regards to the issue under consideration.

The most important verse upon which the supporters of evolution lay great stress is verse 33 of Sūrat Āle ʿImrān:

﴿ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ اصْطَفىٰ آدَمَ وَ نُوحاً وَ آلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَ آلَ عِمْرَانَ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴾

"Surely Allāh chose Ādam and Nūḥ and the descendants of Ibrāhīm and the descendants of ʿImrān above the nations."

They reason that since Nūḥ ﷷ and the descendants of Ibrāhīm ﷷ and the descendants of ʿImrān ﷷ lived in their ummah and were chosen from amongst them, therefore the case of Ādam ﷷ too ought to be similar. That is, during his period, humans – who have been referred to as the nations - must have necessarily existed and Ādam ﷷ had been chosen by Allāh from amongst them. And this reveals that Ādam ﷷ was not the first human on the earth but rather, there had been humans before him; the distinction of Ādam ﷷ over the other humans was his superior intellect and spirituality, and this was the factor that resulted in his selection from amongst the individuals, similar to him.

These supporters have also mentioned numerous other verses, some of which have no relation whatsoever with the issue of evolution such that interpreting them to mean this would be interpreting the

Qurʾān by personal opinion, while other verses are such that they can be considered to be consistent with the theory of evolution as well as with the independent creation of Ādam ﷤. Hence, we have decided against mentioning them here.

As for the objection against this argument, it can be stated that if the term العالـــمين (nations) in the verse is in the meaning of 'contemporary people' and اصطفاء (to choose) means that the selection must have necessarily taken place from similar individuals, then this argument could be accepted. However if one were to say that العالـــمين includes individuals, who are contemporary and those who are not, just as has been reported in the well-known tradition of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, in connection with the excellence of Haḍrat Fāṭimah ﷺ, wherein he says:

أَمَّا ابْـــنَتِي فَاطِمَةُ فَإِنَّهَا سَيِّدَةُ نِسَآءِ الْعَالَمِينَ مِنَ الأَوَّلِينَ وَ الآخِرِينَ.

"As for my daughter Fāṭimah, she is the chief of the ladies of the world, from the first to the last."

Then, in such a case, their argument on the basis of the above verse would be inappropriate. This is because it would be exactly as if one says: Allāh ﷻ had chosen a group of people from amongst the humans (humans of all eras and epochs), one of whom is Ādam ﷤. In such a case, there is no need for humans to have existed during the time of Ādam ﷤ such that the term العالـــمين becomes applicable to them or that Ādam ﷤ is chosen from amongst them. This is especially so when the choosing was being done by Allāh ﷻ, Who had been fully cognizant of the future and of all the generations that were to come.[94]

However, more importantly, the verses which the proponents of 'constancy of species' have selected as proof from the Qurʾān are those that say:

[94] Another possibility is that within a short time, the children of Ādam ﷤ constituted a small society and Ādam ﷤ was the chosen one from amongst them.

Allāh ﷻ has created man from dry clay, which had been taken from dark-coloured and stinking mud. Interestingly, this expression has been utilized in connection with the creation of 'insān'...

﴿ وَ لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِنْ حَمَإٍ مَسْنُونٍ ﴾

"And certainly We created man of clay that gives forth sound, of black mud fashioned in shape."[95]

as well as for 'bashar'...

﴿ وَ إِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي خَالِقٌ بَشَراً مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِنْ حَمَإٍ مَسْنُونٍ ﴾

"And when your Lord said to the angels: Surely I am going to create a mortal of the essence of black mud fashioned in shape."[96]

And later, also for Ādam ﷺ - this being inferred contextually from the mention of the prostration of the angels (Note the verses 29, 30 and 31 of Sūratul Ḥijr.)

At first glance, the apparent meaning of the verse appears to be that initially Ādam ﷺ was created out of black mud and then, when his form was completed, the divine soul was blown into it subsequent to which the angels fell down in prostration before him, except Iblīs.

The style of speech indicates that between the creation of Ādam ﷺ from mud and the emergence of the present form no other species existed.

The term 'ثم', appearing in some of the verses and used in the ʿArabic language to denote 'a sequence with intervening time intervals', can never be taken as evidence to claim the passage of millions of years and the existence of thousands of species; rather, it could quite possibly allude to the intervals that existed between the

[95] *Sūratul Ḥijr* (15), Verse 26
[96] Ibid., Verse 28

various stages of Ādam's ﷺ creation – from mud and then from dry clay and then the blowing of the divine soul.

And it is for this reason that this very term 'ثـــم' has been employed in connection with the creation of man in the embryonic world and the stages of his development within it. The Noble Qurʾān says:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنْ كُنْـــتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِنَ الْبَعْثِ فَإِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ مُضْغَةٍ مُخَلَّقَةٍ وَ غَيْرِ مُخَلَّقَةٍ لِنُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ وَ نُقِرُّ فِي الأَرْحَامِ مَا نَشَآءُ إِلَـــى أَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى ثُمَّ نُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلاً ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوا أَشُدَّكُمْ ﴾

"O' people! if you are in doubt about the raising, then surely We created you from dust, then from a small seed, then from a clot, then from a lump of flesh, complete in make and incomplete, that We may make clear to you; and We cause what We please to stay in the wombs until an appointed time, then We bring you forth as babies, then that you may attain your maturity."[97]

You observe that there is no necessity for 'ثـــم' to indicate upon a lengthy interval; rather, just as it is employed for protracted intervals, it can also be utilized for short intervals too.

From what we have mentioned above, we infer that although the verses of the Qurʾān do not directly mention the issue of evolution or 'constancy of species', nevertheless, the apparent meanings of the verses is more in accordance with the concept of independent creation (of course, this is as far as the creation of man is concerned). Despite not being entirely explicit, the apparent meanings of the verses dealing with the creation of Ādam ﷺ mostly tend to revolve around the concept of independent creation;

[97] *Sūratul Ḥajj* (22), Verse 5

but with regards to the other living beings, the Noble Qurʾān remains silent.[98]

### 18. What is the reality of dreams?

It is necessary that we discuss, in a concise manner, the various opinions that have been propounded in connection with this subject:

There have been numerous interpretations about the reality of the dreams which can be categorized into two categories:

1. Materialistic Interpretation

2. Spiritual Interpretation

The materialists say there could be several causes of dreams:

It is possible that dreams are a direct consequence of the daily acts of man; i.e. whatever has transpired with man over past days becomes embodied for him in his thoughts, whilst he sleeps.

Possibly, a series of unfulfilled desires become a reason for witnessing dreams - a thirsty person observes water in his dreams, and a person awaiting someone, who has gone on a journey, dreams that he has arrived. (From ancient times, it has been said that a camel witnesses cottonseed in its dreams!)

It is likely that fear of something causes man to dream about it; it has been repeatedly observed that those who possess fear of thieves witness them in their dreams.

Freud and the followers of his ideology have presented another material explanation for dreams:

In the course of a detailed introduction they define dreams as being the gratification of repressed tendencies which, with alterations, creep into the arena of self-consciousness, to deceive the "I" within man.

[98] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 11, pg. 86

Explanation: After accepting the fact that the human mind is comprised of two parts: The self-conscious part (that, which is associated with the day-to-day thoughts, voluntary knowledge and the freedom of choice of man) and the sub-conscious part (that, which is concealed within the inner-self as an unfulfilled tendency and inclination), they go on to state: It frequently happens that in the state of sleep, when the 'self-conscious' apparatus has shut down, the inclinations and tendencies which we have been unable to gratify due to certain reasons and which have accumulated in our inner-self turn to the sub-conscious in order to achieve a kind of fictitious and imaginary gratification. At times this is reflected without any change (like an aficionado, who witnesses his beloved, whom he has lost, in his dreams), while at other times there occurs a change in form which is reflected in appropriate appearances, in which case there arises the need for interpretation (of the dreams).

Accordingly, dreams are always associated with the past and never informative of the future. It can only be a useful for reading the unconscious self, and it is for this reason that the dreams of patients are utilized for the treatment of psychological disorders that rely on exposing the unconscious mind.

Some of the experts of the field of nutrition believe that there exists a relationship between 'dreams' and 'the nutritional need of the body', and are of the opinion that if, for example, a person happens to witness blood trickling from his gums in his dreams, it means that the quantity of ascorbic acid in his body has diminished! And if he dreams that his hair have turned white, it can be inferred that he suffers from an inadequacy of vitamin B!!

However, spiritual philosophers offer a different explanation for the occurrence of dreams. They state that dreams are of several kinds:

Dreams that are related to the bygones, inclinations and desires - and these constitute a major portion of man's dreams.

Dreams that are distressing and incoherent; these are an outcome of delusion and imagination (although it is possible that they could possess psychological reasons)

Dreams that are related to the future and provide information in connection with it.

Undoubtedly, dreams that are related to the past and the embodiment of the scenarios that man has seen in the course of his life do not possess any particular interpretation. Similarly, distressing dreams - technically referred to as أَضْغَاثُ أَحْلاَم - which are an outcome of disturbing thoughts and are similar to the thoughts that manifest themselves for man in the state of delirium, too cannot possess any particular interpretation in connection with the future issues of life. However, psychologists and psychoanalysts utilize them and consider them to be a door for the comprehension of the human unconscious self and a key for the treatment of psychological disorders. As such, interpretation of these dreams is used for the purpose of uncovering the mysteries of the mind and the origins of diseases, and not for revealing future happenings of life.

As for the dreams that are related to the future, they too are of two kinds: One kind consisting of dreams that are plain, clear and explicit, and which do not require any interpretation whatsoever; and amazingly enough, at times, materializing exactly as witnessed either in the near or distant future - without the slightest of differences.

The second kind are those dreams which prophesize future events but, due to the influence of certain mental and spiritual factors, have undergone a change of form and hence need to be interpreted.

There are so many instances for each of these dreams that the existence of all of them cannot be denied. Not only have they been mentioned in religious sources and books of history, but these have also been noticed in our own lives and the lives of those who are

known to us, in a measure that prevents us from considering them to be mere coincidence.[99]

## 19. What is meant by 'The Courses' (Sunnat) of Allāh'?

In verse 62 of Sūratul Aḥzāb, the Qurʾān mentions that one of the unchanging 'courses of Allāh' is 'exterminating the conspirators (against Islam) by means of one general attack - the like of which have been observed in the former nations too'.

Similar expressions have also appeared on other occasions in the Qurʾān:

In verse 38 of Sūratul Aḥzāb, the Noble Qurʾān, after issuing the permission to break the incorrect pagan custom, which prohibited a person from marrying the divorced wife of his adopted son, says:

﴿ سُنَّةَ اللّٰهِ فِي الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَ كَانَ أَمْرُ اللّٰهِ قَدَراً مَقْدُوراً ﴾

"Such has been the course of Allāh with respect to those who have gone before; and the command of Allāh is a decree that is made absolute."

In verse 43 of Sūratul Fāṭir, after threatening the sinning nations with perdition, the Noble Qurʾān says:

﴿ فَهَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلاَّ سُنَّةَ الأَوَّلِينَ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللّٰهِ تَبْدِيلاً وَ لَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللّٰهِ تَحْوِيلاً ﴾

"Then should they wait for aught except the way of the former people? For you shall not find any alteration in the course of Allāh; and you shall not find any change in the course of Allāh."

In Sūratul Ghāfir, verse 85, after asserting that bringing faith after witnessing the annihilating chastisement descending upon them was not at all helpful for the obstinate disbelievers of the past nations, the Qurʾān adds:

[99] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 9, pg. 312

﴿ سُنَّةَ اللّٰهِ الَّتِي قَدْ خَلَتْ فِي عِبَادِهِ وَ خَسِرَ هُنَالِكَ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴾

"But their belief was not going to profit them when they had seen Our punishment; (this is) Allāh's law, which has indeed obtained in the matter of His servants, and there the unbelievers are lost."

In verse 23 of Sūratul Fatḥ, after speaking about the victory for the believers, defeat for the disbelievers and non-existence of any protector or helper for them in the battles, it adds:

﴿ سُنَّةَ اللّٰهِ الَّتِي قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَ لَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللّٰهِ تَبْدِيلاً ﴾

"Such has been the course of Allāh that has indeed run before, and you shall not find a change in Allāh's course."

And again in verse 77 of Sūratul Isrā', when speaking of the conspiracy to either banish or kill the Noble Prophet ﷺ, it adds:

﴿ سُنَّةَ مَنْ قَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ مِنْ رُسُلِنَا وَ لاَ تَجِدُ لِسُنَّتِنَا تَحْوِيلاً ﴾

"(This is Our) course with regard to those of Our messengers whom We sent before you, and you shall not find a change in Our course."

From all these verses, it can be clearly inferred that (سنة**or** سنَن) course(s), in these instances, refer to the fundamental laws related to creation and legislation which are never subject to any alteration. In other words, in the world of divine creation and legislation, Allāh ﷻ has ordained certain principles which, similar to the constitutions prevailing amongst the people of the world, cannot become victims of distortion and alteration. These rules had prevailed over the past nations and shall continue to do so over the present and future ones.

Assistance to the prophets, defeat of the disbelievers, the compulsion to act in compliance with the Divine commands howsoever displeasing they may appear to a society, futility of

repentance at the time of descent of Divine chastisement and the like are some examples of these eternal courses.[100]

## 20. Does 'injury by an evil eye' possess any reality?

In verse 51 of Sūratul Qalam, we read:

﴿ وَ إِنْ يَكَادُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَيُزْلِقُونَكَ بِأَبْصَارِهِمْ لَمَّا سَمِعُوا الذِّكْرَ... ﴾

"And those who disbelieve would almost smite you with their eyes when they hear the reminder..."

In view of the above verse the question that arises is: Does injury by means of an evil eye possess any reality?

Many people are of the belief that some kinds of eyes possess a peculiar influence such that if they happen to look at something in wonder, they destroy it or break it, and if they happen to look at a person, they can make him sick or (even) insane.

According to the intellect, this is not something which is impossible. Many of today's scientists believe that concealed in some eyes lies a special magnetic force which possesses great utility, such that it can even be developed by means of training and exercise; the magnetic sleep is induced by means of this very magnetic force of the eyes.

In a world wherein x-rays are able to perform tasks, the like of which even the most destructive of weapons are unable to perform, acknowledging the presence of a force in certain eyes that is capable of influencing someone by means of some special waves should not appear to be fantastic.

It has been widely reported that people have personally witnessed individuals, possessing this mysterious power of the eyes, to have incapacitated humans, animals and things by injuring them by means of 'evil eye'.

[100] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 17, pg. 434

Thus, not only should one not insist on rejecting such issues but instead acknowledge the possibility of their occurrence - scientifically and intellectually.

In the Islamic traditions too, various expressions meet the eye which, to a certain extent, corroborate the existence of such an issue.

In a tradition we read that Asmā Bint ʿUmays once said to the Noble Prophet ﷺ: "At times, some people inflict injury to the children of Jaʿfar by means of 'evil eyes'. Should I procure a charm for them?" (Charm means prayers, which people keep in their possessions to protect themselves from 'evil eyes'; this is also referred to as taʿwīdh).

The Noble Prophet ﷺ replied:

لَوْ كَانَ شَيْءٌ يَسْبِقُ الْقَدْرِ لَسَبَقَهُ الْعَيْنَ.

"Yes (there is no harm in it). Had there been something that could have superseded Divine fate and destiny, it should have been 'evil eye!'"[101]

In another tradition it has been reported that the Commander of the Faithful عليه السلام said: The Noble Prophet ﷺ secured a charm for Imām Ḥasan and Imām Ḥusayn عليهما السلام and recited the following supplication:

أُعِيذُكُمَا بِكَلِمَاتِ اللّٰهِ التَّامَّةِ وَ أَسْمَائِهِ الْحُسْنَى كُلِّهَا عَامَّةً مِنْ شَرِّ السَّامَّةِ وَ الْهَامَّةِ وَ مِنْ شَرِّ كُلِّ عَيْنٍ لاَمَّةٍ وَ مِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ.

"I place you in the refuge of all of the Perfect Words and the Best Names of Allāh from death, harmful animals, evil eye and from the evil of the envious when he envies."

Then turning to us, he ﷺ said: "Likewise Prophet Ibrāhīm did the charm for Ismaʿīl and Isḥāq."[102]

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[101] *Majmaʿul Bayān*, vol. 10, pg. 341
[102] *Tafsīr Nūrul Thaqalaīn*, vol. 5, pg. 400

In Nahjul Balāghah we read:

الْعَيْنُ حَقٌّ وَ الرُّقَـــىٰ حَقٌ.

“Injury by the evil eye is true and resorting to prayers to ward away its evils is true too.”[103 and 104]

## 21. Does ‘good omen’ and ‘evil omen’ possess any reality?

Perhaps the concept of good and evil omens have always prevailed amongst men and nations, all through the ages; they interpreted certain things as auguring good for themselves and considered them to be an indication for their victory and progress, and interpreted some others as portending evil for themselves, looking upon them as a sign for their defeat, failure and lack of success. This belief was held when there existed no logical relation whatsoever between these things and victory and defeat; especially so in the case of ‘evil omen’, which was and is superstitious in essence.

Although these two do not possess any natural effect and influence, nevertheless they can undoubtedly possess a psychological bearing. Predominantly, a good omen induces hope and activity while an evil omen results in despondency, hopelessness and weakness.

It is probably for this reason that whereas auguring good has not been prohibited in the Islamic sources, auguring evil has been intensely criticised. A well-known tradition of the Noble Prophet ﷺ states:

تَفَاءَلُوْا بِالْخَيْرِ تَجِدُوْهُ.

“Regard things as being good omens (and be hopeful) in order that you achieve it.”

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[103] *Nahjul Balāgha*, Short Sayings 400. This tradition has also been narrated as: العين حق in *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*, vol. 7, pg. 171 in the chapter العين حق. In the book *al-Muʿjam al-Mufahhras Li-Alfādh al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī*, (vol. 4, pg. 451) this same meaning has been reported from various sources.

[104] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 24, pg. 426

The positive aspect of this issue is also observed in the life of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and the Imāms ﷺ who, at times, interpreted events as possessing a good omen. For example, during the encounter of the Muslims with the disbelievers of Mecca in Ḥudaibiyyah, we read that when Suhaīl ibne ʿAmr, in his capacity as the representative of the disbelievers of Mecca, desired to meet the Noble Prophet ﷺ and he was informed of his name, he said (to his companions):

قَدْ سَهَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ أَمْرَكُمْ.

"(I interpret the name Suhail to be a good omen and that) this meeting shall go easy upon you."[105]

A celebrated scholar and writer of the 8th century AH alludes to this point in one of his works when he says: "The Noble Prophet ﷺ approved of a good augury because whenever man is hopeful of Allāh's favours, he ventures on the path of good whereas when he severs his hope from Allāh, he shall venture out on the path of evil. Presaging evil results in misgivings and causes one to await misfortunes and endure misery.[106]

As far as the evil omen, which the Arabs refer to as 'ṭatayyur' and 'ṭiyārah', is concerned, the Islamic traditions strongly criticize it; the Qurʾān too has repeatedly censured it.[107] In a tradition we read that the Noble Prophet ﷺ said:

الطِّيْرَةُ شِرْكٌ.

"Auguring evil (and considering the evil omen to have an influence upon the life of man) is a kind of polytheism (shirk)."[108]

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105 *Tafsīrul Mizān*, vol. 19, pg. 86
106 *Safīnatul Biḥār*, vol. 2, pg. 102
107 Like verse 19 of *Sūrat Yāsīn*, verse 47 of *Sūratul Naml* and verse 131 of *Sūratul Aʿrāf*.
108 *Tafsīrul Mizān*, while interpreting the verse presently under discussion.

We also read that the only influence that an evil omen possesses is the psychological one. Imām as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام has said: "An evil omen affects only in the measure you consider it to possess. If you take it lightly, its influence would be trivial, but if you regard it seriously, it would affect you immensely and if you totally disregard it, it would have no effect."[109]

It has been reported in traditions from the Noble Prophet ﷺ that the way to combat evil auguries is to disregard them. It has been narrated that the Noble Prophet ﷺ said: "There are three things from which none can remain safe (and its whisperings are found within the hearts of most men): auguring evil, envy and mistrust."

He ﷺ was asked: "What then should we do?"

He replied: "When you augur evil, ignore it and go your way; when envy manifests itself in your heart, refrain from doing anything in accordance with it, in practice; and when you experience mistrust, disregard it."

Strangely, the issue of good and evil omen had existed and suntil exists in industrially developed countries and amidst intellectuals and even amongst celebrated geniuses. Passing beneath a ladder, falling of a saltcellar and gifting someone a knife are gravely looked upon as evil omens by those living in the West.

Of course, the existence of good omens, just as we had previously mentioned, is not an important issue – it mainly possesses a positive impact and influence. However, the factors of evil auguries must be opposed, fought and expelled from the minds, and the best way for this is by strengthening the spirit of tawakkul (relying on Allāh سبحانه وتعالى) and trust in Allāh سبحانه وتعالى within the hearts, as has been stated in Islamic traditions. [110]

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[109] Ibid.

[110] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 6, pg. 317

## 22. Is qiṣāṣ (the law of retaliation) against the norms of intellect and human sentiments?

There are a group of people who, without reflection, have sought to criticize some of the penal issues of Islam - especially the issue of 'qiṣāṣ' (law of retaliation) with respect to which they have raised great commotion, saying:

The crime perpetrated by a killer is nothing more than taking the life of a person, but you, by means of qiṣāṣ, are repeating the same act!

Qiṣāṣ is just plain vengefulness and brutality. This repugnant attribute needs to be uprooted from amidst the people by means of correct education; however, the supporters of qiṣāṣ breathe fresh life into this abhorrent attribute every day!

Murder is not a crime that takes place at the hands of sound individuals; surely the murderer suffers from some psychological disorder and ought to be treated, and qiṣāṣ cannot be a remedy for such sick individuals.

Issues that are related to social order need to develop in step with the society; hence, laws that used to be implemented fourteen hundred years ago should not be implemented in today's society!

Is it not better that instead of qiṣāṣ the killers are placed in prisons, compelled to work and utilized for the benefit of the society. In this way, not only would the society remain protected from their evils but simultaneously, they could be utilized to the maximum extent possible.

These are summarized versions of the objections that are propounded in connection with the issue of qiṣāṣ.

A close study of the verses of qiṣāṣ in the Qurʾān would make manifest the answers to these objections.

﴿ وَ لَكُم فِي الْقِصَاصِ حَيَاةٌ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ﴾

"And there is life for you in (the law of) retaliation, O men of understanding, that you may guard yourselves."[111]

This is because, at times, elimination of dangerous individuals is the best option for the development of a society and since qiṣāṣ safeguards life, it is perhaps for this reason that it has been placed as an instinct within man.

Be it the medical system, agriculture industry or animal husbandry, etc... each and every thing is based upon this rational principle – elimination of a dangerous and troublesome entity. We observe that for the purpose of protecting the body, the diseased part of the body is amputated; or for ensuring the growth of a plant, harmful and inconveniencing branches are sawed away. Those, who regard the killing of the murderer as being a loss of another individual, only visualize it from an individual perspective; however if they were to take the welfare of the entire society into consideration and were to know what role the implementation of qiṣāṣ plays in safeguarding and educating all the other individuals, they would surely review their words. Eliminating such blood-shedding individuals from the society is akin to severing a harmful limb or a branch, which, as per the ruling of reason, must necessarily be severed. And indeed, it must be realized that until today, no one has ever objected to the amputation of a diseased limb or detrimental branch. This was in connection with the first objection.

With respect to the second objection, it must be realized that fundamentally, the legislation of qiṣāṣ is in no way related to the issue of vengefulness. This is because vengeance means smothering the flames of anger arising due to a personal issue. On the other hand, qiṣāṣ has been decreed for preventing a repetition of oppression within the society and with the objective of seeking seek justice for the other innocent individuals of it.

[111] *Sūratul Baqarah* (2), Verse 179

As for the third objection that the killer must necessarily be suffering from a psychological disorder and that it is not possible for such a crime to be perpetrated on the part of normal individuals, it must be said that this speech is true in certain instances and Islam too, in such instances, has not imposed the ruling of qiṣāṣ for an insane killer or the like. However, the sickness of the killer cannot be provided as an excuse since the evils that this would unleash and the audacity that it would impart to offenders is evident for one and all. And if this argument is true in the case of killers, it should also be true for all the criminals, offenders and those who violate the rights of others. This is because a person possessing a complete soundness of intellect shall never encroach upon the rights of others. Accordingly, all penal laws should be annulled and all offenders should be dispatched to hospitals housing psychologically-diseased patients instead of prisons.

The fourth objection stated that the development of society does not accept the law of qiṣāṣ, for qiṣāṣ could only play a role in the ancient societies. Accordingly today, qiṣāṣ being regarded as a ruling contrary to conscience must be deleted. The answer lies in this one sentence:

The above claim, taking into account the widespread nature of offences in today's world and the statistics of casualties of the battle-fields and other locations, is one which is worthless and merely a flight of the imagination. And upon the assumption that such a world does come into existence, Islam has never presented qiṣāṣ to be the one and only way but has also placed the ruling of pardon alongside it. Undoubtedly, in that assumed environment, the people might themselves prefer granting pardon to the killer - however, in today's world, wherein offences in various forms are surely more numerous and barbaric than those in the past, deletion of this law would not achieve anything except an increase in the offences.

With respect to the fifth objection it must be comprehended that the aim of qiṣāṣ, as explicitly expressed by the Qurʾān, is to safeguard the general life of the society and prevent the repetition of crime. Certainly, prisons do not possess a noticeable influence (especially today's prisons, which are better than the houses of many of the offenders). It is due to this that in countries where capital punishment had been annulled, in a short time, the crime and murder figures had skyrocketed. This is particularly so if the sentence of imprisonment, as is usual, can be graced with pardon, for in such a case criminals would perpetuate criminal violations with a greater peace of mind and tranquillity of thought.[112]

## 23. Is the punishment of amputation of the hands, rough and violent?

Before answering this question it is essential to mention the conditions which govern the punishment of amputation of a thief's hand.

From the entire collection of Islamic traditions, it can be inferred that there are numerous requirements, which have to be fulfilled, in order that this Islamic punishment is put into execution, and failing which, initiating this punishment is not permissible. Some of these requirements are as follows:

The item that is stolen should possess a value of at least one-fourth of a dinar.[113]

It should have been stolen from a secured place such as a house, a shop, internal pockets etc.

The theft should not have taken place during famines and droughts, when the people are suffering from hunger and possess no means.

[112] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 1, pg. 607

[113] One dinār is equal to one legal mithqāl of coined gold, and one legal mithqāl is equivalent to 18 barley grains. Thus, one legal mithqāl is equal to ¾ ordinary mithqāl.

The thief should be sane and an adult, and should have committed the act out of his own choice and free will.

This ruling shall not be applicable in the case of a father, who steals from the property of his son, or a partner, who does so from the property of the partnership.

Stealing fruits from the trees of a garden has also been exempted from this ruling.

Every instance, in which there exists a likelihood of error on the part of the thief that he may have mistaken other's property as his own, is exempted this ruling.

In addition to the above, there are some other conditions, which have been mentioned and explained in books of jurisprudence.

The above should not be mistaken to mean that theft is prohibited and unlawful only when all the above conditions gather together; in Islam, theft in every form, in every measure and in every way is prohibited and unlawful. What is meant by the above conditions is that only under such circumstances can this penalty be put into execution.

**The measure in which the hand should be amputated**

It is popular amongst our jurists that on the basis of the traditions of the Ahlul Bayt عليهم السلام only the four fingers of the right hand must be amputation and not more - unlike the Sunnite jurists, who have stipulated more than this.

**Is this Islamic penalty rough and violent?**

Very often the opponents of Islam and even some of the less knowledgeable Muslims have levelled this objection that this Islamic penalty appears to be intensely harsh, and if this ruling were to be implemented in today's world, there would be numerous hands which would have to be cut. In addition, enforcement of this ruling would entail that a person, in addition to losing an important part of his body, would become infamous and notorious all throughout his life.

In answering this objection, attention ought to be paid to this reality that:

Firstly: Just as we had mentioned in the conditions of this ruling that not every thief shall become encompassed by this law, rather, there shall be only one group of dangerous thieves, who shall be formally subjected to this punishment.

Secondly: In view of the fact that in Islam there are several requirements and conditions that need to be met in order to prove a crime, the occurrence of this punishment further diminishes.

Thirdly: Many of the objections which people, possessing less knowledge, have propounded against the Islamic laws is simply because they have sought to examine its one ruling, independently and without taking into account its other rulings; in other words, they attempt to envisage that ruling in a completely non-Islamic society. But if we were to take into consideration the fact that Islam is not just one ruling but a collection of rulings, which when implemented in a society results in enforcement of social justice, fight against poverty, correct education and training, awakening, awareness and piety, then it would become manifest that very few people would become eligible for this punishment. However, it should not be mistaken to mean that in today's societies this ruling should not be enforced; rather, it means that all these aspects and dimensions ought to be taken into consideration at the time of judgement.

In short, an Islamic government is duty-bound to fulfill the basic needs of all the individuals of the country, impart to them the necessary education and also train them with respect to ethics and morals; it is self-evident that in such an environment, offenders shall be few and far in between.

Fourthly: If we observe theft to be rampant today, it is because such rulings are not being enforced; and hence, in environments in which this Islamic ruling is enforced (like Saudi Arabia, in which until very recently this ruling had been in force), extraordinary

safety is observed to prevail over them with regards money and property. Numerous pilgrims to the House of Allāh have personally witnessed purses and wallets containing money lying on the roads and in the streets with none possessing the courage to touch them until such a time that the functionaries of the Department of Collection of Lost Items carry them to the mentioned department from where the owners retrieve their lost items by presenting the necessary identifications. Most of the shops are not locked at night but despite this, no one attempts to break into them.

Interestingly, this Islamic ruling - despite being in force for centuries and under whose shade the Muslims in the initial stages of Islam lived in peace, security and comfort – has only been implemented upon a very few number.

Is the amputation of a few criminal hands an extravagant price to pay for the several-century security of a nation?

Some people object: Is the execution of this penalty with respect to a thief for the sake of a quarter of a dinar not in contradiction with Islam's immense respect for the life of the Muslims and the importance attached by it for protecting them from all harms? This is especially so in view of the fact that the atonement money, stipulated by Islam, for cutting four fingers of a person is an amount, which is excessive and extravagant.

Incidentally, this same question, as reported in some of the books of history, had been put to the distinguished scholar ʿAlam al-Hudā - the late Sayyid Murtaḍā - a thousand years ago. The questioner presented his query in the form of a couplet, which is as follows:

يَدٌ بِخَمْسِ مِئَين عَسْجَدٍ وُدِيَتْ     مَا بَالُهَا قُطِعَتْ فِي رُبْعِ دِيْنَارٍ ؟

"The hand, whose atonement is five hundred dinars; why should it be amputated for a quarter of a dinar?"[114]

[114] Of course, it must be noted that five hundred dinārs is in the event that five fingers are cut. However, as we have previously mentioned, according to the Shīʿa faith, only four fingers are to be cut for theft.

Sayyid Murtaḍā, in reply, recited this couplet:

عِزُّ الاَمَانَةِ أَغْلاَهَا وَ أَرْخَصَهَا ذِلُّ الْخِيَانَةِ فَافْهَمْ حِكْمَةَ الْبَارِيْ

"The honour of trustworthiness made it high-priced, while the abjectness of treachery lowered its value, so comprehend the wisdom of Allāh."[115 and 116]

## 24. Were all the companions of the Noble Prophet ﷺ upright and righteous?

Some of the Sunni brothers, due to the respect and importance attached to the 'first of the Muhājirs (Emigrants)' by the Noble Qurʾān, have sought to infer that they had not committed any wrongdoing until the end of their lives and so, without exception, all of them ought to be looked upon with great esteem. They then generalized this issue to include all the 'companions' because of Qurʾān's praise for them in connection with the 'pledge of Riḍwān' and other events. In practice, without taking into regard the deeds of the companions, they considered all of them to be exceptional humans and refused themselves the permission to indulge in any kind of examination and criticism with respect to their deeds.

One of them, the celebrated commentator and the author of al-Manār, has vociferously attacked the Shīʿites as to why they single out some of the initial Muhājirs for criticism... little realizing the great inconsistency of such beliefs with the spirit of Islam and its history?

Undoubtedly, the companions, especially the initial Muhājirs, possess a special reverence; however, this would only have been until so long as they had continued to tread the correct path and exhibit devotion (towards Islam), but from the day some of the companions deviated from the true path of Islam, the Noble Qurʾān would surely view them differently.

[115] This incident has been mentioned in vol. 6, pg. 134 of *Tafsīr Alusī*, however, it has been attributed to Alam al-Dīn al-Sakhāvi instead of ʿAlam al-Hudā.

[116] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 4, pg. 376

For example, how can we ever exonerate Ṭalḥah and Zubayr for reneging the pledge and opposing the leader – one, who, apart from the explicit statements of the Noble Prophet ﷺ attesting his leadership, had been elected by all the Muslims, including themselves? How can we clear them of the deaths of seventeen thousand Muslims, whose blood had been spilled during the Battle of the Camel? If a person were to shed the blood of one innocent person, he would have no excuse to present before Allāh, what then to speak of this large multitude!

Basically, is it possible to conceive that ʿAlī ؑ and his companions, as well as Ṭalḥah, Zubayr and some others of the companions of the Noble Prophet ﷺ who had teamed up with them, were both on the side of truth in the Battle of the Camel?

Does any logic and intellect accept this manifest contrast? Can we, in the name of 'inviolability of the companions' close our eyes, regard them as special personalities and shove the entire history of Islam after the departure of the Noble Prophet ﷺ into oblivion? And should we flout the Islamic criterion of:

﴿ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ ﴾

"Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allāh is (he who is) the most righteous of you."

**What kind of irrational and illogical judgement is this?**

Basically, does there arise any problem if, one day, a person or persons were to stand in the ranks of the inmates of Paradise and supporters of truth, while on another day in the ranks of the inmates of Hell and opponents of truth? Are all the people infallibles? Have we ourselves not witnessed all these transformations taking place within individuals?

The story of the People of Apostasy - a group of Muslims who had turned apostates after the departure of the Noble Prophet ﷺ – has been narrated by the Sunnites, as well as the Shīʿites in their books,

that the first Caliph initiated a military expedition against them and suppressed their uprising. Had the People of Apostasy not witnessed the Noble Prophet ﷺ and were they not his companions?

More amazing is the fact that in order to escape from this strange inconsistency some have brought in the pretext of ijtihād (independent reasoning) and state that individuals such as Ṭalḥah, Zubayr, Muāʿwiyah and their supporters had been mujtahids (religious jurists) and although they had erred in their ijtihād, they had not perpetrated any sin; on the contrary, for these very acts of theirs they shall receive their rewards from Allāh!!

Honestly, what a disgraceful logic! Is rebelling against the successor of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, breaking the pledge and shedding the blood of thousands of innocent people - and that too for the purpose of power, rank and wealth - so complex an issue that one is unable to perceive its evils? Does shedding that great measure of innocent blood entitle one to receive rewards from Allāh ﷻ?

If we were to exonerate a group of companions, who had perpetrated offences in such a manner, without any doubt not a single offender would remain in this world, for we would have acquitted all criminals by this logic. Such unstructured defence of the companions would cause Islam to be viewed with great cynicism.

Consequently there lies no alternative except to look upon everyone - especially the companions of the Noble Prophet ﷺ – with reverence and esteem, however only for so long as they do not deviate from the path of truth, justice and the agenda of Islam![117]

Numerous Sunni commentators have reported this tradition from Ḥamīd ibne Ziyād, who says: I approached Muḥammad ibne Kaʿb al-Quraḍī and said to him: What do you have to say in connection with the companions of the Noble Prophet ﷺ? He replied:

[117] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 7, pg. 263

جَمِيْعُ أَصْحَابِ رَسُوْلِ اللهِ فِي الْجَنَّةِ مُحْسِنهُمْ وَ مُسِيْئُهُمْ.

"All the companions are the inmates of Paradise - the righteous ones as well as the evil ones!"

I said to him: From where do you state such a thing? Whereupon he recited the following verse:

﴿ وَ السَّابِقُونَ الْأَوَّلُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَ الْأَنْصَارِ وَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُمْ وَ رَضُوا عَنْهُ ﴾

"And (as for) the foremost, the first of the Muhajirs and the Ansars, and those who followed them in goodness, Allāh is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him."[118]

And then continued: With respect to the 'Followers' there is a condition that they ought to have followed only the righteous deeds of the companions (only in this case would they attain deliverance, but this is not a condition for the companions to attain deliverance).[119]

However, this claim is unacceptable for several reasons:

The ruling mentioned in the above verse should also be applicable in the case of the 'followers', who, as we had alluded previously, are those, who follow in the footsteps of the initial Muhājirs (Emigrants) and Anṣār (Helpers). Therefore, the entire ummah, without exception, should be of the delivered ones!

As for the fact that in the tradition of Muḥammad ibne Kaʿb it has been said that Allāh ﷻ has placed a condition of good deeds with regards to the 'followers' i.e. they should only follow the righteous deeds and conduct of the companions, and not their sins, this is an amazing statement.

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118 *Sūratul Tawbah* (9), Verse 100

119 *Tafsīrul Manār* and the commentary of Fakhr Rāzī, while discussing the above verse.

This is because if the condition prescribed for the followers in order to attain deliverance is to follow the righteous deeds of the companions, then it is all the more necessary for this condition to be prescribed for the companions too.

In other words Allāh ﷻ, in the above verse, says that His pleasure and happiness shall encompass all the initial Muhājirs and Anṣār, who were righteous and treaded the correct path, and all those who follow them. The verse does not say that He desires to encompass the Muhājirs and Anṣār with His happiness, irrespective of whether they are good or bad, but as for the 'followers', He shall accept them only on the basis of that specific condition.

Reason and intellect totally reject this issue; this is because reason does not consider the companions of the Noble Prophet ﷺ to possess any distinction over the others in this regard. Where lies the difference between the Abū Jahls and those, who initially embraced Islam but later deviated from it?

And why should those, who came into this world years and centuries after the Noble Prophet ﷺ and whose sacrifices and heroisms were no less than those of the early companions of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, not be eligible for this Divine mercy? Especially since they possessed this distinction that despite not witnessing the Noble Prophet ﷺ, they had accepted him and had brought faith upon him.

How can the Qurʾān, which says: Surely the most honourable of you with Allāh is the one who is the most righteous amongst you, ever approve of such irrational discrimination? How can the Qurʾān, which in its various verses, curses the sinners and unjust ones, and regards them as deserving of Allāh's chastisement, approve of this irrational safety of the companions with respect to Divine punishment? Can there be exceptions to these threats and curses of the Qurʾān such that a particular group is kept exempted? Why and for what reason?

Apart from these, can such a ruling not be regarded as showing a green light to them to perpetrate any and every kind of sin and offence?

This ruling does not conform with the history of Islam at all, for there have been numerous individuals who once had stood in the ranks of Muhājirs and Anṣār, only to later deviate from their paths and find themselves incurring the anger of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and consequently the wrath of Allāh. Have we not heard of how Thaʿlabah ibne Hātib Anṣārī deviated and became the object of the Noble Prophet's ﷺ anger?

To state this more clearly, if what they have intended is that the companions of the Noble Prophet ﷺ did not commit any sins, and were pure and infallible from every kind of disobedience and transgression, this is tantamount to rejecting the most obvious and self-evident issues.

And if they meant that the companions did commit offences, but despite this Allāh is pleased with them, this claim would mean that Allāh has been pleased with sins!

Who is it that can absolve and acquit Ṭalḥah and Zubayr, who initially had been of the special companions of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, and ʿĀishah, his wife, of the death of seventeen thousand Muslims in the Battle of the Camel? Was Allāh ﷻ pleased with these killings and blood-shed?

Would opposition to ʿAlī عليه السلام, the representative of the Noble Prophet ﷺ - who, even assuming that he had not been appointed as the Caliph by the Noble Prophet ﷺ, at the very least, had been chosen by the consensus of the ummah - and battling him and his loyal companions be acts that would obtain the pleasure of Allāh ﷻ?

The truth is that the advocates of the notion of inviolability of the companions, by their insistence and emphasis for the issue, have disfigured the pure face of Islam, which has always considered faith

and righteous deeds to be the measure for gauging a person's character.

And finally, the pleasure and happiness of Allāh ﷻ that has been mentioned in the verse under discussion is associated with four titles - emigration, assistance, faith and righteous deeds. Thus, as long as all the 'companions' and the 'followers' adhered to these, they would be the object of Allāh's ﷻ grace, but the day they distanced themselves from these, they also distanced themselves from Allāh's ﷻ pleasure.

From the above discussion it becomes plainly apparent that the statements of the erudite, albeit prejudiced commentator - the author of *al-Manār* - in which he criticizes the Shīʿites for their lack of belief in the purity and uprightness of all the companions, possess no value and worth. The Shīʿites have not committed any sin save for the fact that they have accepted the rulings of intellect and reason, and the testimonies of the Noble Qurʾān and history, and disregarded the unfounded and incorrect distinctions presented by the prejudiced ones.[120]

## 25. Why is it that some of the oppressors and sinners are drowned in comfort and bounties and do not witness any punishment?

From the verses of the Noble Qurʾān it can be inferred that those who have not become greatly polluted by means of sins, Allāh ﷻ - by means of alarm bells, reactions of their deeds or at times, punishments in accordance with the deeds committed by them - awakens them and returns them to the correct path. These are those, who suntil possess the worthiness to be guided aright and hence are eligible for the grace of Allāh ﷻ. In truth, their punishments and troubles can be regarded as bounties for them, as the Qurʾān says:

[120] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 8, pg. 108

﴿ ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَ الْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُون ﴾

"Corruption has appeared in the land and the sea on account of what the hands of men have wrought, that He may make them taste a part of that which they have done, so that they may return."[121]

However those who have drowned themselves in sins and disobedience, and have transgressed all limits of rebelliousness, Allāh leaves them to their own selves and grants them an open field in order that they commit more sins and thus become deserving of the maximum punishment. These are those, who have advanced such that they cannot return; they have ripped apart the curtains of shame and modesty, and have stripped themselves of the worthiness to attain Divine guidance.

Verse 178 of Sūrat Āle ʿImrān emphasises this purport when it says: And let not those who disbelieve think that Our granting them respite is better for their souls; We grant them respite only that they may add to their sins; and they shall have a disgraceful chastisement.

The courageous lady of Islam, Zaynab-e-Kubrā عليها السلام, in the sermon which she delivered in Syria based her argument upon this verse vis-à-vis the rebellious Yazīd - a manifest example of a sinner, who could never turn back - when she said to him: You are ecstatic today and imagine that confining the world for us, shutting out the horizons of the heavens upon us and leading us like captives from one city to another, is a sign of your strength? (You imagine that) you possess power and rank in the eyes of Allāh تعالى while we have no standing before Him? You are mistaken! Allāh has granted you this freedom and respite so that your back becomes heavy by the burden of your sins and (do know that) a painful chastisement awaits you...

[121] *Sūratul Rūm* (30), Verse 41

## ANSWER TO ONE QUESTION

Incidentally, the above verse also answers this question which plagues the mind of many as to why is it that many of the oppressors and sinners are surrounded by comfort, and do not taste chastisement?

The Qurʾān says that these are individuals that are beyond rectification and, according to the law of creation, have been left to their own selves so that they drop down to the maximum extent possible and consequently become deserving of the severest punishment.

Apart from this, it can also be concluded from some of the verses of the Qurʾān that, at times, Allāh ﷻ grants numerous bounties to such individuals and, at a time when they are completely engrossed and absorbed in their pleasures, suddenly takes them away so that they may taste the maximum torment in the life of this very world. This is because losing such an affluent and leisurely life is intensely disturbing, as we read:

﴿ فَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ أَبْوَابَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَتَّى إِذَا فَرِحُوا بِمَا أُوتُوا أَخَذْنَاهُمْ بَغْتَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْلِسُونَ ﴾

"But when they neglected that with which they had been admonished, We opened for them the doors of all things, until when they rejoiced in what they were given We seized them suddenly; then lo! they were in utter despair."[122]

In truth, such individuals are like one, who wickedly and unjustly climbs a tree, becoming happier as he ascends higher until he reaches the top of the tree; suddenly a storm begins to blow and he falls down from that height - a fall that leaves all his bones shattered.[123]

[122] *Sūratul Anʿām* (6), Verse 44
[123] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 3, pg. 183

## 26. Why is it that nations, devoid of faith and belief, possess a life of ease and comfort?

Verse 96 of Sūratul Aʿrāf says:

﴿ وَ لَوْ أَنَّ أَهلَ الْقُرَىٰ آمَنُوا وَ اتَّقَوْا لَفَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ بَرَكَاتٍ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ وَ الْأَرضِ ﴾

"And if the people of the towns had believed and guarded (against evil) We would certainly have opened up for them blessings from the heaven and the earth, but they rejected, so We overtook them for what they had earned."

In view of the above verse a question arises that if faith and piety are the cause for the descent of Divine blessings, why are nations that do not possess faith seen to be in great ease and luxury?

The answer to this question shall become clear by taking two points into regard:

The imagination that nations that lack faith and piety are in ease and comfort is a great error that stems from another error – that of regarding wealth to be the means of prosperity.

Usually people are given to imagine that the nation that possesses the maximum wealth and the most advanced industries is the most prosperous nation whereas if we were to penetrate into such societies and observe from close the gnawing pains that overwhelm their body and soul, we would realize that many of them are the most miserable ones on the earth – notwithstanding the fact that all these very comparative advancements are a consequence of effort, endeavour, discipline and sense of responsibility – all of which had been part of the teachings of the prophets.

Just as we write this portion of the commentary, the newspapers reported that New York - the most affluent and the advanced region of the material world - was witness to a very strange scenario arising out of a sudden blackout. Taking advantage of the situation,

innumerable people rampaged into shops and looted them; the looting was so widespread that the police arrested three thousand people in connection with this incident.

The actual pillagers were undoubtedly much more in number for these were the people who were unable to escape in time. Undeniably these individuals were not professionals, who had planned the general rampage beforehand since the incident itself was sudden and unexpected.

Accordingly, we infer that one blackout caused tens of thousands of people of the inhabitants of an affluent city to be transformed into pillagers; this not only reveals the moral decadence of a nation but also reflects the intense lack of social security.

The newspapers carried another report, which served to present a complete picture of this incident. The report stated that a celebrity, who had been staying in one of the reputed skyscraper hotels of New York during this period, said: The blackout made walking in the hotel aisles a dangerous proposition to the extent that the hotel staff refused to permit the guests to walk in the aisles alone to proceed to their rooms lest they be accosted by the plunderers, and so they used to send them to their rooms in groups of ten or more, under the protection of armed escorts! The celebrity added that he did not possess the courage to emerge from his room, until he was overwhelmed with hunger!

However, such blackouts in the backward oriental nations do not cause such problems indicating that despite possessing wealth and industrial advancement, they do not possess security in their environments. Apart from this, eye-witnesses report that murder in these environments is akin to drinking one mouthful of water.

And we clearly perceive that if one were to be given the entire world but at the same time made to live in such conditions, he would be of the most miserable of all men. Besides, the security problem is just one of their problems; they face numerous other social problems which, by themselves, are painful and

inconveniencing. In the light of these realities, wealth should not be mistaken and confused with prosperity.

As for what has been said regarding why those, who possess faith and piety, lagged behind in backwardness, it must be stated that if the meaning of faith and piety is to merely claim the acceptance of Islam and maintain adherence to the basic teachings of the prophets, then we do confess that such individuals have surely remained backward. However we know that the reality of faith and piety is their penetration into all acts of life, and this is something which cannot be achieved by mere claims.

It is unfortunate that in most of the Islamic societies today, the fundamental teachings of the prophets of Allāh ﷻ and Islam remain forsaken or semi-forsaken, leaving these societies to possess an appearance which is not that of true Muslims.

Islam invites towards purity, righteousness, trustworthiness, striving and effort – where is that trustworthiness and effort? Islam invites towards science, knowledge, awakening and awareness – where is that profuse knowledge and awareness? Islam invites towards unity, closeness of ranks and self-sacrifice – do all these dictates prevail over the Islamic societies today, perfectly and completely? Thus, we ought to acknowledge that Islam is one thing while we Muslims are something else.[124]

## 27. If every person's sustenance has been decreed, then why are some (found to be) hungry?

Verse 6 of Sūrat Hūd says:

﴿ وَ مَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلاَّ وَ عَلَى اللَّهِ رِزْقُهَا ﴾

"And there is no animal in the earth but on Allāh is the sustenance of it."

In view of the above verse, the question that comes to mind is: Why it is that in today's world and all throughout history there are some,

[124] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 6, pg. 268

who have died and continue to die of hunger? Have their livelihoods not been secured and safeguarded?

The answer to this questions demands attention towards the following points:

Firstly: Securing sustenance does not mean that it should be made ready for a person and sent to his house or a morsel prepared and put into his mouth; rather, it means that the groundwork has been prepared, but man's effort is a condition for transforming them into actuality. Even Maryam ﷺ, in that severe state of labour in that lonely desert wherein Allāh ordained her sustenance to become manifest in the form of dates upon the date-palm, was ordered to move and addressed as follows:

﴿ وَ هُزِّي إِلَيكِ بِجِذْعِ النَّخلَةِ... ﴾

"And shake towards you the trunk of the palm tree, it will drop on you fresh ripe dates."[125]

Secondly: If, in the past and the present, men have usurped the rights of others and have taken their livelihoods from them unjustly, this does not prove that Allāh ﷻ has not secured their livelihoods. In other words, in addition to the issue of effort and striving, the existence of social justice is also a condition for a just distribution of sustenence.

And if it were to be said: Why does not Allāh ﷻ prevent the injustices perpetrated by the unjust ones? We state that the life of man is based on the freedom of will so that all are tested and examined, and not on force and compulsion - for in such a case the development and perfection (of man) would not take place.

Thirdly: In this very earth there exist numerous sources that can provide nutrition to mankind, but which need to be discovered and put to use. However, if man exhibits negligence in this regard, he is the one to be blamed.

[125] *Surat Maryam* (19), Verse 25

We ought not to forget that some areas of Africa, the inhabitants of which die of hunger today, are amongst the most enriched regions of the world. However, destructive factors, which were mentioned above, have brought them to this miserable state of theirs.[126]

## 28. What are the reasons for the backwardness of the Muslims?

It can be clearly concluded from the verses of the Qurʾān that whenever we suffer reverses and failures, they are always a result of one of the following two factors: Either we have neglected and failed in our jihād and in our efforts, or that we were lacking in sincerity. And if these two were to gather together, as per the emphatic Divine promise, success and guidance shall certainly come our way.

Why have Muslims, the leaders of yesterday, lagged behind today?

Why do they extend their hands to the foreigners for everything, even for their culture and their own laws?

Why should they rely upon others to protect themselves vis-à-vis political storms and military assaults?

Why is it that yesterday the others benefited from their knowledge and culture whereas today they (the Muslims) have to turn to the others?

And finally, why is it that they are captives in the clutches of others and their lands are under the occupation of the transgressors?

All these 'whys' possess just one answer: Either they have forgotten the jihād or that the intentions have become polluted.

Indeed, jihād in the fields of science, culture, politics, economics and military has been thrust into the dark world of forgetfulness. Affection for the self, love of the world, desire for comfort and pleasure and personal motives have prevailed over them to the extent that those of them who are killed by own hands, are more than those killed by the enemies!

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[126] *Tafsīr Payām-e-Qurʾān*, vol. 2, pg. 357

The overwhelmed state of some West-stricken and East-stricken individuals, self-selling by some of those vested with authority, and isolation of intellectuals and scholars have not only taken the jihād from them but also the sincerity.

Whenever there manifests slight sincerity amongst our ranks and our warriors jolt themselves into activity, successes are achieved one after the other and the fetters of captivity fall apart. Despairs turn into hopes, failures into successes, humiliation into dignity, and disarray and hypocrisy into unity and cohesion. How inspirational is the Qurʾān, which, in a short sentence, has not only mentioned the malady but has also presented its remedy!

Truly, those who strive in the path of Allāh ﷻ are the beneficiaries of Divine guidance and it is self-evident that in the presence of His guidance, deviation and failure are inconceivable.

In any event, every person plainly senses and perceives this Qurʾānic reality in his efforts that when he sets out to strive for Allāh ﷻ and in His path, doors open up before him, problems decrease in severity and adversities tend to become more bearable.[127]

## 29. What is the incident of Fadak?

Fadak had been one of the villages around Medinah situated at a distance of 140 kilometres from Khaybar. In the year 7 AH when the forts of Khaybar fell one after another to the soldiers of Islam and the central power of the Jews was smashed, the inhabitants of Fadak approached the Noble Prophet ﷺ in submission and handed over one half of their land and gardens to him retaining the other half for themselves. In addition, they also agreed to shoulder the responsibility of cultivating his share of the land and used to receive some benefits for this effort of theirs.

In view of the verse of booty (Faī), this land was specific to the Noble Prophet ﷺ and he could utilize it for himself or use it in other

[127] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 16, pg. 350

instances as stated in verse 7 of Sūratul Ḥashr and accordingly, he gifted it to his daughter Fāṭimah ﷺ. This is a fact, which has been emphasized and stated by numerous Sunnite and Shīʿite historians and commentators. In the commentary *al-Durrul Manthūr*, it has been narrated from Ibne ʿAbbās that when the verse:

﴿ وَ آتِ ذَا الْقُربـــىٰ حَقَّهُ ﴾

"Then give to the near of kin his due"[128]

was revealed, the Noble Prophet ﷺ gifted Fadak to Fāṭimah ﷺ:[129]

أَقطَعَ رَسُولُ اللّٰهِ فَاطِمَةَ فَدَکَ.

In the chapter of ṣilah raḥim (establishing bonds of consanguinity) of the book *Kanz al-ʿUmmāl*, written as annotations for the book *Musnad* of Aḥmad ibne Ḥanbal, it has been reported from Abū Saʿīd Khudrī that when the above verse was revealed, the Noble Prophet ﷺ sought Fāṭimah ﷺ and said to her:

يا فَاطِمَةُ لَکِ فَدَکُ.

"O' Fāṭimah! Fadak is for you."[130]

Ḥākim Nishābūrī has also reported this same meaning in his book, which deals with history.[131]

Ibne Abil Ḥadīd too, in his commentary of Nahjul Balāghah, has mentioned the incident of Fadak in great detail[132] and so too have numerous other books.

But after the Noble Prophet ﷺ those, who perceived this economic power in the hands of ʿAlī's ﷺ spouse as a danger to their political power and were determined to isolate his supporters in every respect, confiscated it on the basis of a fabricated tradition:

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[128] *Sūratul Rūm* (30), Verse 38
[129] a*l-Durr al-Manthūr*, vol. 4, pg. 177
[130] *Kanzul ʿUmmāl*, vol. 2, pg. 158
[131] Refer the book Fadak, pg. 49
[132] *Sharh of Nahjul Balāgha* of Ibn Abīl Ḥadīd, vol. 16, pg. 209 onwards

نَحْنُ مَعَاشِرَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ لاَ نُوَرِّثُ.

And despite the fact that Fāṭimah ﷺ was in official possession of the land - and one in possession of something is not asked to present witnesses - she was asked to present her witnesses (that Fadak belonged to her). She presented them, who testified that the Noble Prophet ﷺ had personally gifted it to her, but they disregarded these witnesses. In later periods, those Caliphs who desired to express their inclinations towards the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ, would return Fadak to them but soon after another would come up and confiscate it once again! This was repeated on numerous occasions during the time of the Umayyad and the ʿAbbāsid caliphs.

The incident of Fadak and the events associated with it during the initial stages of Islam and in the later eras are of the most painful, sorrowful but at the same time, the most admonitory portions of the history of Islam which ought to be placed under meticulous study so that it illuminates various other incidents of Islam.

Significantly, the Sunni narrator - Muslim ibne Ḥajjāj Nishābūrī - has reported the incident of Fāṭimah's ﷺ demand for Fadak in detail in his book Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim and reports from ʿĀishah that after the first Caliph's refusal to return Fadak to Fāṭimah ﷺ, she was enraged with him and did not speak a word to him for as long as she was alive.[133 and 134]

## 30. Was Abū Ṭālib a Muslim?

All the Shiʿite scholars and some of the eminent Sunnite ones like Ibne Abil Ḥadīd, the commentator of Nahjul Balāghah, Qastalānī, in his book *Irshād al-Sāri* and Zīni Dahlan, in his annotations to the book *Sīrah Halabī*, have regarded Abū Ṭālib as being a Muslim. In the original Islamic sources too, there exist numerous evidences in support of this issue, which when studied leave us profoundly

[133] *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 3, pg. 1380, no. 52 of 'The Book of Jihād'
[134] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 23, pg. 510

astonished and perplexed as to why Abū Ṭālib finds himself the object of such unkindness and accusation?

How is it possible that one, who had defended the Noble Prophet ﷺ by his entire existence, and time after time had presented himself and his children as a shield for him in times of peril, be the object of such an allegation?

And here the discerning researchers have surmised that this wave of antagonism against Abū Ṭālib is one that is political in nature and stems from the opposition of the evil lineage of Banī Umayyah to ʿAlī عليه السلام.

This is because it is not just Abū Ṭālib, who due to his proximity with ʿAlī عليه السلام, has found himself to be an object of this onslaught; rather, we observe that in the history of Islam, whosoever happened to possess a close relation - in any manner whatsoever - with ʿAlī عليه السلام had not remained protected from these foul and shabby offensives. In truth, Abū Ṭālib had no crime to his name save that he was the father of ʿAlī ibne Abī Ṭālib - the great leader of Islam!

Here, we enumerate, only briefly, some varied arguments that bear a clear testimony to the faith of Abū Ṭālib, and leave the details for books that have been particularly devoted to this issue:

Even prior to the proclamation of the prophethood of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, Abū Ṭālib had been well cognizant of the fact that his nephew would attain the rank of prophethood. This is because the historians have written that on one of the journeys that Abū Ṭālib had undertaken to Egypt in the caravan of the Quraish, he had taken his twelve-year old nephew Muḥammad, along with him. In the course of this journey various extraordinary acts were witnessed from him; in addition, as soon as the caravan came across a monk by the name of Bahīra - who had been engaged in worship in the monastery for years, possessed knowledge of the Old and New Testaments and used to be visited by the trade caravans who passed that way - Muḥammad ﷺ, who was not more than twelve years old then, attracted his attention. Bahīra, after gazing at him deeply and

profoundly, asked: To which of you does this child belong? Those around pointed to Abū Ṭālib, who informed him that he was his nephew.

Bahīra said: "This child has a brilliant future before him. He is the very prophet, whose prophethood has been prophesized by the Divine books and whose attributes I have read in them."[135]

Even before this encounter, there had been other indications which made Abū Ṭālib aware of the prophethood and the spirituality of the Noble Prophet ﷺ.

As has been stated by the Sunni scholar Shahristānī (the author of *al-Milal Wal Nihal*) and others, one year skies of Mecca withheld their rains and the city was caught in the grip of a severe drought. Abū Ṭālib ordered his nephew, Muḥammad, who was just a suckling then, to be brought to him. When the child, suntil wrapped in swaddling-clothes, was handed to him, he stood before the Kaʿbah, raised the child upwards three times and each time beseeched: O' Lord! By the sake of this child, send down the blessed rains upon us.

It was not long before a cloud became visible above the horizon and soon covered the skies above Mecca; it then began to pour with such intensity that it was feared that the Ka'bah might suffer damage.

Shahristānī then writes: This incident, which indicates Abū Ṭālib's knowledge of his nephew's prophethood right from his infancy, proves that he believed in the Noble Prophet ﷺ. Later, Abū Ṭālib recited the following verses in connection with this incident:

وَ أَبْيَضُ يُسْتَسْقَى الْغَمَامُ بِوَجْهِهِ ثِمَالُ الْيَتَامَى عِصْمَةٌ لِلأَرَامِلِ.

"He is a luminous-faced one and it is for him that the clouds pour down rain he is the shelter of the orphans and the protector of the widows."

يَلُوْذُ بِهِ الْهُلاَّكُ مِنْ آلِ هَاشِمٍ. فَهُمْ عِنْدَهُ فِي نِعْمَةٍ وَ فَوَاضِلَ.

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[135] An abstract from *Sīrah Ibn Hishām* (vol. 1, pg. 191), *Sīrah Halabī* (vol. 1, pg. 131) and other books.

"Those from the Banī Hāshim who face destruction seek refuge in him and it is by means of him that they find themselves receiving bounties and favours."

وَ مِيْزَانُ صِدْقٍ لاَ يَخِيْسُ شَعِيْرَةً وَ وَزَّانٌ صِدْقٌ وَزْنُهُ غَيْرُ هَائِلٍ.

"He is that balance of justice that never violates (even) one grain of barley and he is a correct measurer whose weight and measurement are not to be feared for error."

In addition to Shahristānī, numerous eminent historians too have reported the incident of the people resorting to Abū Ṭālib during the famine, and his entreaty to Allāh by employing the honour of the Noble Prophet ﷺ. ʿAllāmah Aminī has mentioned this incident in his book, *al-Ghadīr*, quoting it from the books *Sharḥ Bukhārī, al-Mawāhib al-Ladunniyyah*, *al-Khaṣāiṣ al-Kubra*, *Sharḥ Bahjah al-Mahāfil*, *Sīrah Halabī*, *Sīrah Nabawī* and *Talabah al-Tālib*.[136]

In addition, certain well-known Islamic books contain some poems from Abū Ṭālib, all of which have been gathered and this collection referred to as *Diwān Abī Ṭālib*. Some of these poems are presented below:

وَاللهِ لَنْ يَصِلُوْا إِلَيْكَ بِجَمْعِهِمْ حَتَّى أُوَسَّدَ فِي التُّرَابِ دَفِيْنًا.

"O' Nephew!  The enemies shall never reach you until such time that Abū Ṭālib has rested in the earth and taken the grave as his bed,"

فَاصْدَعْ بِأَمْرِكَ مَا عَلَيْكَ غَضَاضَةً وَابْشِرْ وَقِرَّ بِذَاكَ مِنْهُ عُيُوْنًا.

"So accomplish your assignment and fear none give glad tidings and make the eyes joyous and cheerful."

وَدَعَوْتَنِيْ وَزَعَمْتُ أَنَّكَ نَاصِحِيْ وَلَقَدْ صَدَقْتَ وَكُنْتَ قَبْلَ أَمِيْنًا.

"You invited me towards your faith and I know fully well that you are a sincere adviser to me and surely you invited and are trustworthy in your invitation."

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[136] *al-Ghadīr*, vol. 7, pg. 346

وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُ أَنَّ دِيْنَ مُحَمَّدٍ مِنْ خَيْرِ أَدْيَانِ الْبَرِيَّةِ دِيْنًا.

"Indeed I have perceived that the religion of Muḥammad is the most excellent of all religions."[137]

أَلَمْ تَعْلَمُوا أَنَّا وَجَدْنَا مُحَمَّداً نَبِيّاً كَمُوسَى خُطَّ فِي أَوَّلِ الْكُتُبِ.

"O' Quraish, do you not know that we have found Muḥammad to be a prophet just as Mūsā was and his mention has been recorded in the Divine books?"

وَأَنَّ عَلَيْهِ فِي الْعِبَادِ مَحَبَّةً وَلاَ سِنَّ فِيْمَنْ خَصَّهُ اللهُ فِي الْحُبِّ.

"The servants of Allāh possess a special fondness with respect to him and this is not out of place for one whom Allāh has singled out for His love."[138]

Ibne Abīl Ḥadīd, after presenting a great number of Abū Ṭālib's poems (which Ibne Shahr Āshūb, in his book *Mutashābihat al-Qur'ān*, has claimed to be three thousand in number) says: After going through the entire collection of these poems, there does not remain a semblance of a doubt for us that Abū Ṭālib had indeed believed in the religion of his nephew.

Traditions have been narrated from the Noble Prophet ﷺ which testify to the faith of his self-sacrificing uncle - Abū Ṭālib. According to the author of the book *Abū Ṭālib: Mu'minu Quraysh*, when Abū Ṭālib passed away the Noble Prophet ﷺ, after having escorted his funeral and as he mourned his death, said: O' My Father! O' Abū Ṭālib! How sad I am over your death? How can I ever forget the tragedy of your death? O' you who fostered me when I was an infant and accepted by invitation when I was a grown up; in

[137] *Khazānah al-ʿArab*, *Tarīkh Ibn Kathīr*, *Sharḥ of Nahjul Balāgha Ibn Abil Ḥadīd*, *Fatḥ al-Bāri*, *Bulūgh al-ʿArab*, *Tārīkh Abi al-Fidā*, *Sīrah al-Nabawī* etc.., as reported in *al-Ghadīr*, vol. 8.

[138] Ibid.

proximity to you, I was as an eye is to its socket, and as a soul is to the body.[139]

Also, he ﷺ used to repeatedly confess:

مَا نَالَتْ مِنِّيْ قُرَيْشُ شَيْئًا حَتَّى مَاتَ أَبُو طَالِبٍ.

"The Quraish were unable to inconvenience me in any way until after the death of Abū Ṭālib."[140]

It is an indisputable fact that, years before Abū Ṭālib's death, the Noble Prophet ﷺ had been ordered to refrain from establishing any kind of cordial relationship with the polytheists. In such a situation, exhibition of such fondness and affection towards Abū Ṭālib on his ﷺ part indicates that he ﷺ had known that he was a monotheist. Or else, how could it be conceivable that while he prohibited others from befriending the polytheists he himself exhibited affection towards Abū Ṭālib that reached the frontiers of love?

In traditions that have been narrated from the Ahlul Bayt عليهم السلام too, there are abundant evidences that meet the eye which attest to Abū Ṭālib's faith and sincerity. These traditions, mentioning all of which would only protract this discussion, contain rational and logical arguments, like the tradition of the fourth Imām عليه السلام in which it has been reported that the Imām عليه السلام, in reply to a question, attests to the faith of Abū Ṭālib and then says: Honestly, I am amazed as to why some are given to imagine that Abū Ṭālib was a disbeliever! Do they not realize that by harbouring such beliefs, they hurl taunts and sarcasms at Abū Ṭālib and the Noble Prophet ﷺ? But has it not been prohibited in several verses of the Qurʾān for a woman to continue to remain in the matrimony of her disbelieving spouse after she has accepted Islam? It is an incontrovertible fact that

[139] Sheikh al-Abātih, quoting from the book *Abū Ṭālib: The Believer of the Quraish.*

[140] Ṭabarī, quoting from the book *Abu Ṭālib: The Believer from the Quraish.*

Fāṭimah Bint Asad, who had been of those who had taken a lead into Islam, had Abū Ṭālib as her spouse all through her life.[141]

Apart from all these, if we were to be sceptical of all things, the one reality with respect to which none can harbour scepticism and doubt is that Abū Ṭālib was of the most vociferous and intense supporters of Islam and the Noble Prophet ﷺ, and his support was in such measure that it cannot be interpreted as stemming from consanguineous ties or tribal partianship.

The most manifest example of this being the incident of Shiʿb Abī Ṭālib which has been reported by all the historians; when the Quraish subjected the Noble Prophet ﷺ and the Muslims to an intense social, economic and political blockade and severed all connections with them, Abū Ṭālib was the only supporter and defender of the Noble Prophet ﷺ. For three years he abandoned all his other work and, taking the Hashemites to a valley located between the mountains of Mecca and popularly known as Shiʿb Abī Ṭālib, settled down there. His self-sacrifice reached such an extent that in addition to constructing special towers for protection against the attacks of the Quraish, every night, he would move the Noble Prophet ﷺ to a different place to sleep and make his dear son ʿAlī عليه السلام sleep in his place instead. When ʿAlī عليه السلام said: Dear father! Under these circumstances, I am bound to be killed, Abū Ṭālib said: Dear son! Do not lose your forbearance. Every living thing advances towards death. I have sacrificed you for the son of ʿAbdullāh.

Interestingly, ʿAlī عليه السلام responds to his father's words by saying: Dear father! These words of mine were not out of my apprehension of being killed in the path of Muḥammad ﷺ rather, it was spoken since I wanted you to know how obedient I am to you and that I am fully prepared to help Aḥmad.[142]

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[141] *Kitāb al-Ḥujjah*; *al-Darajāt al-Rafīʿah* quoting from *al-Ghadīr*, vol. 8.
[142] *al-Ghadīr*, vol. 8

We are of the opinion that every person, who casts aside his prejudice and studies the gold lines of history about Abū Ṭālib impartially would concur with Ibne Abil Ḥadīd and say:[143]

وَ لَوْ لاَ ابُو طَالِبٍ وَ ابْنُهُ لَمَا مَثلَ الدِّيْنُ شَخِصاً فَقَامَا فَذَاكَ بِمَكَّةَ آوِى وَ حَامَى وَ هَذَا بِيَثْرِبَ جَسَّ الْحَمَاماً.

"If it was not for the presence of Abū Ṭālib and his son, the religion (of Islam) would never have stayed in place and stood up aloft. Abū Ṭālib rushed to the assistance of the Noble Prophet ﷺ in Mecca, while ʿAlī عليه السلام, in supporting Islam, plummeted into a whirlpool of death in Yathrib (Medinah)!"[144]

## 31. What is the criterion with regards to the greater sins?

In connection with the greater sins, reference to which has been made in several verses of the Noble Qurʾān[145], there have been many views by commentators on the one hand and the scholars of traditions and the jurists on the other.

Some have regarded all sins as being greater sins; this is because against Allāh, the Mighty, every sin is enormous.

Others are of the opinion that the concept of lesser and greater, employed in connection with sins, is relative in nature. Every sin, in comparison to a more serious sin is looked upon as being lesser while in comparison to a less serious sin, as great.

Some believe that Allāh's ﷻ warning, in the Qurʾān, of chastisement with respect to a sin, serves as a criterion for that sin to be considered great.

Occasionally it has also been said that every sin which necessitates the implementation of legal (religious) penalty is a greater sin.

[143] Ibid.

[144] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 5, pg. 192

[145] *Sūratul Nisāʾ* (4), Verse 31; *Sūratul Shūra* (42), Verse 37, and the verses presently under consideration.

However, in view of the fact that the term 'great' indicates upon the enormity of the sin, the best description for it would be every sin, which happens to possess one of the following, can be regarded as a greater sin:

The sins with respect to which Allāh ﷻ has issued a warning of chastisement.

Sins that have been regarded by the Imāms and the traditions as being grave.

Sins that have been regarded by religious sources to be more severe than sins that are known to be of the greater sins.

And finally, sins, which the authentic traditions expressly state to be great.

The greater sins that are mentioned in the Islamic traditions vary in number. In some traditions, they are said to be seven in number (killing a soul, being disowned by the parents, usury, returning to the land of kufr after emigrating from it, falsely accusing a chaste woman of adultery, misappropriating the property of orphans and flight from jihād.)[146]

Some other traditions have enumerated them to be seven in number with the difference being that 'being disowned by the parents' has been substituted by:

كُلُّ مَا أَوجَبَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيهِ النَّارَ.

"All (those sins) for which Allāh has made (the punishment of) Hell mandatory."

In some, their number is seen to be ten, while in others it is 19 and in yet others the figure is much higher.[147]

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[146] *Wasā'il ash-Shī'a*, vol. 11, Chapter Abwābu Jihād al-Nafs, Chapter 46, no. 1

[147] For further explanation, refer the above source (Chapter 46 from Abwābu Jihād al-Nafs). Thirty seven traditions, which enumerate and specify the Greater sins, have been mentioned there.

This difference in their figure stems from the fact that all the greater sins are not uniform and similar - some are more serious and grave than the others, or in other words, they are Akbar al-Kabāir (greatest of the greater sins) and thus, there is no conflict or contradiction amongst them.[148]

### 32. Why is it necessary to utter Allāh's name at the time of slaughtering (animals)?

Does reciting the name of Allāh ﷻ or another entity while slaughtering an animal have an influence upon the meat of the animal as far as hygiene and sanitation is concerned?

In answer to this question it must be mentioned that it is not essential for the name of Allāh ﷻ or another entity to necessitate an impact on the substance and essence of the meat in terms of cleanliness. This is because, the prohibition imposed on certain things in Islam are dictated by several factors. At times, the prohibition is for the purpose of hygiene and protection of the body, while at other times it is for the purification of the soul and on occasions it is for preserving the social order. In reality, the prohibition imposed upon consumption of meat of animals that have been slaughtered by reciting the names of idols has a spiritual, ethical and educative dimension associated with it. Such acts distance man from Allāh ﷻ and possess undesirable psychological effects; this is so since this act belongs to the rites associated with polytheism and paganism, and serves to revive their memories.[149]

### 33. How does Islam view monasticism?

In verse 27 of Sūratul Ḥadīd, we read:

﴿ وَ رَهْبَانِيَّةً ابْتَدَعُوهَا مَا كَتَبْنَاهَا عَلَيْهِمْ إِلاَّ ابْتِغَآءَ رِضْوَانِ اللّٰهِ فَمَا رَعَوْهَا حَقَّ رِعَايَتِهَا ﴾

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[148] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 22, pg. 541

[149] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 1, pg. 588

"And (as for) monkery, they innovated it-- We did not prescribe it to them-- only to seek Allāh's pleasure, but they did not observe it with its due observance."

In view of the above verse, the question that arises is: What is Islam's viewpoint about monasticism?

The term رَهبَانِيَّة (Monasticism) is derived from رهبة meaning fear and dread, which, in this case, means fear of Allāh ﷻ. According to Rāghib, in his book Mufradāt, it is a fear, which is in combination with piety and perturbation. The word تَرَهُّب is in the meaning of تَعَبُّد , to worship; and رَهبَانِيَّة means intense devotion and worship.

Monasticism of a desired kind existed amongst the Christians although it had not been made compulsory in Christianity; however, the followers of ʿIsā ﵇ distorted the concept by hauling it beyond its limits.

And it is for this reason that Islam has vehemently denounced it and the well-known tradition, which states:

لاَ رَهْبَانِيَّةَ فِي الْإِسْلاَمِ.

"There is no (room for) monasticism in Islam", is witnessed in numerous Islamic sources.[150]

One of the ugly innovations of the Christians with respect to monasticism had been 'prohibition of marriage' for the males and females who had abandoned the world. Others were 'social seclusion', disregarding the human responsibilities within a society, selecting secluded and far-flung monasteries and nunneries for living and worship in an environment, isolated from society. Later, great evils came into existence within the monasteries and the living centres of the monks, some of which - Allāh Willing - we shall present later as a concluding portion of this discussion.

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150 This tradition has been reported in *Majmaʿul Bayān* under رهب as also in *al-Nihāyah* of Ibn Kathīr.

Certainly, the monks and nuns did extend positive services too like nursing individuals suffering from diseases that were dangerous and difficult to cure such as leprosy; propagation of religion in regions that were distant and amongst people that were wild and barbaric; initiating research programmes etc. Nevertheless, these acts in comparison to the entire system were trivial and insignificant, and on the whole, its evils were far greater than its benefits.

Fundamentally, man is an entity that has been created for a life within a society, and his material and spiritual development can only be achieved within a social life, and it is for this reason that none of the Divine religions have rejected this concept (of social life). On the contrary, they have endeavoured to strengthen its foundation.

Allāh has placed 'sexual desire' within man to preserve lineage, and every thing that attempts to reject it totally is absolutely incorrect.

The Islamic abstemiousness (zuhd), which means leading a simple life, eliminating luxuries and not becoming a captive of wealth and rank, is in no way related to the issue of monasticism. This is so since monasticism means segregation and alienation from the society whereas abstemiousness means liberation for a more social living.

In a well-known tradition we read that one day the son of ʿUthmān ibne Maẓʿūn died which so aggrieved him that he declared his house to be a mosque and (abandoning all other work) engaged himself in worship. When the Noble Prophet ﷺ came to know of this, he summoned him and said:

يَا عُثْمَانَ بْنَ مَظْعُونٍ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَمْ يَكْتُبْ عَلَيْنَا الرَّهْبَانِيَّةَ إِنَّمَا رَهْبَانِيَّةُ أُمَّتِي الْجِهَادُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّٰهِ.

"O' ʿUthmān! Surely, Allāh, the Blessed and the Exalted has not ordained monasticism for us; monasticism of my ummah is only

jihād in the way of Allāh."[151]

The above tradition is an allusion to the fact that if you desire to renounce the material life, do not do so negatively and by means of social seclusion; rather, seek it positively – in jihād in the way of Allāh ﷻ.

The Noble Prophet ﷺ then went on to present a detailed explanation of the merits of congregational prayers – which itself emphasizes the rejection of monasticism and seclusion.

In another tradition we read that ʿAlī ibne Jaʿfar asks his brother Imām Mūsā ibne Kāẓim ؑ: "Does it befit a Muslim to go on a journey or adopt asceticism, enclose himself in his house and not come out of it?" The Imām ؑ replied: "No."[152]

**Explanation**

The journey that has been prohibited in this tradition is something which is akin to monasticism - a kind of itinerant monasticism; some people, without procuring for themselves a house, engaging themselves in work or seeking to earn a livelihood, converted themselves into globetrotters without provisions and supplies. Constantly on the move from one place to another and fulfilling their needs by begging from the people, they looked upon this as a kind of renunciation of the world. But Islam has rejected the stationary as well as itinerant monasticism; yes, according to the teachings of Islam the important thing is that man should be abstemious while within the heart of society and not while secluded and segregated from it!

## THE HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF MONASTICISM

The history of Christianity reveals that monasticism, in its present form, had not existed in the first century of Christianity, but was rborn after the third century AD during the manifestation of the Roman emperor Disiyus and his intense drive against the followers

[151] *Biḥārul Anwār*, vol. 70, pg. 114 (Chapter al-Nahī ʿan al-Rahbaniyah), no. 1

[152] *Biḥārul Anwār*, vol. 70, pg. 119, no. 10

of ʿIsā ﷷ, who, as a result of their defeat at the hands of this brutal emperor, sought refuge in the wilderness.[153]

The Islamic traditions too report this meaning, albeit more profoundly. It has been narrated that the Noble Prophet ﷺ said to Ibne Masʿud: "Do you know from where did monasticism originate?"

Ibne Masʿud replied: "Allāh and His Messenger know better."

He ﷺ said: After ʿIsā ﷷ, some tyrants came to the fore on the scene of leadership. The believers fought them three times and suffered defeat and so, they fled to the deserts and mountains, and, awaiting the arrival of the prophet, prophesized (Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ by ʿIsā ﷷ), engaged themselves in worship in the caves. Some of them remained on their religion while others followed the path of disbelief.

Then continuing, he ﷺ said: "Do you know what is the monasticism of my ummah?"

Ibne Masʿud said: "Allāh and His Messenger know better."

He ﷺ said:

أَلْهِجْرَةُ وَ الْجِهَادُ وَ الصَّلاةُ وَ الصَّومُ وَ الحَجُّ وَ الْعُمرَةُ.

"Emigration, Jihād, Ṣalāt, fasting, Ḥajj and ʿUmrah."[154]

Will Durant, the renowned historian, in volume 13 of his well-known history presents a detailed discussion about monks, and is of the opinion that it was from the 4th century AD that nuns began to affiliate themselves with the monks; day by day monasticism was on the increase until it reached its zenith in the 10th century AD.[155]

Undoubtedly, this social occurrence, like other occurrences, in addition to possessing historical roots also possesses psychological

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[153] *Dāirah al-Maʿārif Qarn Bīstum*, under رهب.

[154] *Majmaʿul Bayān*, vol. 9, pg. 243; Another tradition, similar to this but slightly abridged, has been mentioned in the commentary *al-Durr al-Manthur*, (vol. 6, pg. 177)

[155] William Durant, vol. 13, pg. 443

ones; one of the facts which can be alluded to is that the psychological reaction of different individuals and nations against defeats and failures are totally different and varied. Some develop an inclination to adopt seclusion and introversion, totally withdrawing themselves from society and social activities whereas there are some, who derive the lesson of endurance from failures, and come to possess greater firmness and resistance. The former group resorts to monasticism or something akin to it while the latter, in contrast, becomes more social.

## ETHICAL AND MORAL EVILS RESULTING DUE TO MONASTICISM

Swerving from the laws of creation always occasion negative repercussions and thus, it is not a matter of astonishment that when man distances himself from a social life, which is inherent and innate to him, he suffers from intense negative ramifications. And it is for this reason that monasticism, which is in contrast to the fundamentals of man's natural disposition, gives birth to great evils, some of which are as follows:

Man, by nature, is civil and urban, and monasticism is in contradiction with this spirit of man and thus draws human societies into decadence and change of direction.

Not only does monasticism not lead to the purification of morals and perfection of soul, instead it leads to ethical deviation, lethargy, conceit, vanity, superiority complex and the like. And upon the supposition that man does manage to acquire an ethical excellence in a state of seclusion, it would not be regarded as an accomplishment, for excellence is when man is able to liberate himself from moral uncleanness while he is within a society.

Renunciation of marriage, which is one of the fundamentals of monasticism, not only does not bring about any virtue but on the contrary results in psychological disorders. The book, *Encyclopedia of the 20$^{th}$ Century*, states: Some of the monks considered paying

attention to the female sex to be a Satanic act and harboured this concept to such an extent that they were unwilling to bring the female species of animals to their houses, lest its satanic soul cause harm and detriment to their spirituality!!

Despite this, history is witness to numerous atrocious acts from the monasteries, such that, according to Will Durant, Pope Innocent III described one of the monasteries as a brothel![156]

Some of these monasteries had been transformed into centres of congregation for the world-loving, gluttonous and licentious ones to such an extent that the best of the wines could be found in them.

Of course, according to the testimony of history, ʿIsā عليه السلام never married, however this was definitely not because of his opposition to marriage - rather, his short life-span coupled with his perpetual journeys to different parts of the world for the propagation of religion did not permit him this liberty.

The discussion of monasticism befits separate books, devoted entirely to this topic, and if we were to dwell upon it in detail, we would deviate from our commentarial discussion.

We conclude this discussion by presenting a tradition from Imām ʿAlī عليه السلام, who, while interpreting the verse:

﴿ قُلْ هَلْ نُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِالْأَخْسَرِينَ أَعْمالاً الَّذِينَ ضَلَّ سَعْيُهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَ هُمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ يُحْسِنُونَ صُنْعاً ﴾

"Say: Shall We inform you of the greatest losers in (their) deeds? (These are) they whose labour is lost in this world's life and they think that they are well versed in skill of the work of hands."[157] said:

هُمُ الرُّهْبَانَ الَّذِينَ حَبِسُوا أَنْفُسَهُم فِي السَّوَارِي.

[156] Ibid.

[157] *Sūratul Kahf* (18), Verse 103, 104

"One of the manifest examples of this are the monks, who had imprisoned themselves in the mountains and wilderness, and were under the impression that they were performing an excellent work."[158 and 159]

## 34. What do 'spiritual vision' and 'mystical intuition' mean?

One of the sources of acquiring cognizance is spiritual vision and mystical intuition.

Primarily it is essential to define this source, which is unfamiliar to a great number of people, in order that on the one hand, the difference between this and the issue of revelation, inspiration and innate disposition becomes clear and the ignorant ones do not consider it to be a figment of imagination and on the other, the path of misuse that many have resorted to in connection with this topic and which has compelled many to look upon it with scepticism, is blocked.

The entities of the world of existence are fundamentally of two kinds:

1. Entities that can be perceived by the senses; these entities are referred to as the World of Senses.

2. Entities that are concealed from our senses and cannot be perceived by them; these are referred to as the World of Unseen.

But at times it is possible that man acquires a new perception, enabling him to witness a portion of the World of Unseen (as per his capability). In other words, the curtains are drawn aside and some of the realities of the World of Unseen are made manifest for him as clearly as man perceives things by his senses - rather, much clearer and in a manner which imparts much more certainty.

This state is referred to as spiritual vision or mystical intuition.

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[158] *Kanzul 'Ummāl*, vol. 2, no. 4496

[159] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 23, pg. 384

This is the same thing that the Qurʾān mentions in verse 5 and 6 of Sūratul Takāthur:

﴿ كَلاَّ لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ. لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ﴾

"Nay! if you had known with a certain knowledge, You should most certainly have seen the hell!"

In various Islamic sources, regarding both the believers and the offenders, it has been stated that at the time of death they come to acquire a spiritual vision as a result of which they are able witness the angels and the holy souls of Allāh's awliyā, whereas those around them lack the ability to perceive these things.

This is that very state which the Noble Prophet ﷺ came to possess during the Battle of Khandaq when he said: "In the spark that was created by the striking of a pickaxe with a stone, I witnessed the palaces of Khusroe or Caesar or the castles of the Yemeni kings."[160]

Similarly, it has been reported about Āminah, the honourable mother of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, that when she bore the Noble Prophet ﷺ in her womb, she said: I saw a light emanate from me and by means of it I witnessed the palaces of the land of Basri, in Syria. These are neither revelation nor are they spiritual inspiration but a kind of perception that differs vastly from sensory vision.

This is that very station which a renowned critic has mentioned, saying: If an eye of the Unseen opens up for you, the atoms of this universe shall become intimate and share their secrets with you. It is then that you shall hear the talks of water and flower. Hearing the hubbub of the glorification (of Allāh) of the entities of the universe, scepticism shall be erased from within you. The ears of the untrustworthy ones do not hear these realities and only the person, who has been made intimate, is worthy of hearing these sounds and secrets.[161]

[160] *Kāmil Ibn Kathīr*, vol. 2, pg. 179

[161] A summary of some renowned verses.

Thus, mystical intuition and vision can be defined in one sentence as: The entry into the meta-sensory world and witnessing its realties by an inner eye in a manner similar to sensory vision - only more powerful or listening to those murmurings by the ears of the soul.

Of course, the words of every person who claims such vision cannot be hastily accepted, nor can the words of every claimant be believed. Nevertheless, the initial discussion in this topic is concerned with the actual existence of such a source of (Divine) cognizance[162], after which comes the discussion regarding the manner of attaining it, and finally, the means of distinguishing between the true and false claimants.

## 35. How can 'allotment of sustenance on the part of Allāh' and 'working for one's livelihood' be consistent with one another?

In verse 26 of Sūratul Raʿd, we read:

﴿ اَللّٰهُ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَآءُ وَ يَقْدِرُ ﴾

"Allāh amplifies and straitens the means of subsistence for whom He pleases."

Taking into consideration the above verse, the question, which arises, is: How can the fact, that Allāh ﷻ apportions the sustenance, be regarded to be consistent with 'expending effort for one's livelihood'?

It is not just this verse which declares the increase and decrease in sustenance to be dictated by Allāh ﷻ, but from various other verses too it can be clearly inferred that Allāh ﷻ augments or diminishes it from whosoever He pleases. However, these words do not mean, as some ignorant individuals have conjectured, that one should stop one's efforts and sit down in a corner and wait for Allāh ﷻ to provide the allotted sustenance. Such individuals, whose negative thoughts provide an excellent excuse for those who look upon

[162] *Tafsīr Payām-e-Qur'an*, vol. 1, pg. 252

religion as being unconstructive, are oblivious of two fundamental points:

Firstly: The Divine Will and desire referred to in these verses is not something that is uncalculated; Allāh's Will is not separate from His wisdom and always takes into account ability, competence and worthiness.

Secondly: This issue does not mean that we reject the Realm of Causes. This is because the Realm of Causes of the world of creation is also a consequence of Allāh's Will and can never be separated from the Legislative will of Allāh ﷻ.

Expressing it more clearly, Allāh's ﷻ will with respect to enlarging and straitening sustenance is bound by certain conditions, which are dominant over man's life - effort, sincerity and self-sacrifice and conversely, laziness and evil intentions play a determinative role in this regard. And this is why the Qurʾān has repeatedly regarded man as being governed by his own effort and activity, and is of the opinion that the benefits which he derives out of life is in the measure of his endeavour.

It is for this reason that in the book *Wasāʾil al-Shīʿa*, in the section of trade, income and work, a chapter has been designated in connection with expending exertion for the purpose of procuring sustenance, and numerous traditions have been mentioned in this regard. In addition, another chapter has been devoted to traditions that reproach idleness, excessive sleep and laziness in the path of fulfilling the requirements of life.

In one of the traditions, the Commander of the Faithful عليه السلام says: "In the very beginning, when entities entered into marriage, laziness and weakness married each other and an offspring, by the name of 'poverty', was born to them!"[163]

In a tradition, Imām as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام says: "Do not exhibit indolence with respect to procuring sustenance and fulfilling the needs of the

[163] *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿa*, vol. 12, pg. 38

life, for our fathers and forefathers used to strive for it and endeavoured to procure it!”[164]

In another tradition Imām al-Bāqir ﷷ says: “I abhor the person, who is slothful with respect to his worldly work, for one who is lazy in his worldly work (despite the fact that he reaps its returns soon), is lazier in his work related the Hereafter.”[165]

It has also been reported that Imām Mūsā ibne Jaʿfar ﷷ said: “Allāh detests one who sleeps excessively, and regards one who is idle (and does not work) as His enemy.” [166 and 167]

## 36. Is naskh (abrogation) permitted in the religious laws?

According to the dictionary, نَسْخ means to efface and to dispel while, in the terminology of the Shariʿah, it means altering one ruling and replacing it with another one. For example:

After the emigration to Medinah, the Muslims, for a period of fifteen months, offered their prayers in the direction of Bayt al-Maqdas after which the order to change the Qiblah was issued and all of them were obliged to face the Kaʿbah while offering their prayers.

In verse 15 of Sūratul Nisā, the punishment stipulated for women, who committed fornication, was that if four witnesses testified to the crime they should be imprisoned in the house until death overtook them or until the time Allāh ﷻ decreed another alternative for them.

This verse was abrogated by means of verse 2 of Sūratul Nūr in which their punishment was changed to one hundred lashes.

At this juncture, there is a well-known objection, which is propounded as follows: If the first ruling possessed expediency and common good, then why was it abrogated? And if not, why was it legislated in the first place?

[164] Ibid.
[165] Ibid., pg. 37
[166] Ibid.
[167] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 10, pg. 204

In other words: Why was this ruling not legislated from the very beginning so as to not have needed alteration?

Islamic scholars, since ancient times, have presented the answer to this question in their books which, together with our explanation, is as follows:

We do know that at times, with the change in time and conditions of the environment, man's needs change while at other times they remain stable. One day a programme guarantees his success while on another day, due to changes in circumstances, it is likely that the same programme acts as an obstacle in his path of progress.

One day a particular medicine is extraordinarily effective for a sick person and so the doctor prescribes it for him, but on another day, due to a comparative betterment of his state, it is possible that this medicine could even be detrimental for him and so the doctor orders it to be discontinued and substitutes it with another medicine.

It is possible that a book is beneficial for a student this year but useless for him the next. An experienced teacher should adjust the course such that year after year only those books, which are necessary for the students and ought to be taught.

This issue, especially in view of the laws regarding the development of man and societies, becomes clearer; in the course of human development and perfection, at times a programme is beneficial and constructive while at times, detrimental and therefore in need of a change. The need for changing the curriculum at various time-intervals appears to become more manifest, particularly during the start of social and ideological revolutions.

Of course, it ought not to be forgotten that the fundamentals of Divine laws which constitute the basic foundations are the same everywhere; under no circumstances shall Unity, social justice or hundreds of other such rulings ever undergo an alteration. The change only occurs in secondary issues.

Additionally, it should not be forgotten that indeed the development of religions can reach such a state that the final religion is revealed as the Seal of the religions, such that there can be no alteration in its rulings.[168]

## 37. Is it correct to label days as auspicious and inauspicious?

Among many people, it is a usual practise to consider some days to be blessed while some others to be inauspicious and sinister - although great differences prevail amongst man in singling them out. Nevertheless, the point of discussion is: To what extent is this general belief accepted in Islam? Or does it have its origins in Islam?

Of course, intellectually, it is not impossible that parts of time differ from each other - some possessing the characteristics of auspiciousness while others possessing contrary characteristics – however, we have no means to either establish or refute the issue. All we can say is that such a thing is possible despite not having been proved by means of rational proofs.

Accordingly, if we come to possess religious proofs that reach us by way of revelation and which serve to illuminate wider horizons for us in connection with this issue, not only is there no harm in accepting them, but on the contrary, its acceptance becomes essential.

There are only two instances in the Qurʾān which allude to inauspicious days - verse 19 of Sūratul Qamar and verse 16 of Sūratul Fuṣṣilat – and which narrate the story of the people of ʿĀd:

﴿ فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيْحاً صَرْصَراً فِي أَيَّامٍ نَحِسَاتٍ ﴾

"So We sent on them a furious wind in unlucky days."[169]

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[168] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 1, pg. 390

[169] It should be noted that the term نحسات, which appears in the verse, is an adjective for the term ايام, i.e. the mentioned days have been described as inauspicious, whereas in the verse presently under discussion (في يوم نحس مستمر),

On the other hand, the expression مبارك (blessed) too is observed in some of the verses of the Qurʾān, as is mentioned in connection with the Night of Qadr:

﴿ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيلَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ... ﴾

"Surely We revealed it on a blessed night..."[170]

Originally, نحس means 'extraordinary redness of the horizon', which makes it appear as نحاس meaning 'a flame of fire that is devoid of smoke' and then, in this case, it is employed to mean 'inauspicious'.

Thus, the Qurʾān does not possess anything more than a vague allusion to this issue; however, as far as Islamic traditions are concerned, a number of them mention auspicious and inauspicious days. And although some of them are weak and, at times, mixed with traditions that have been fabricated or associated with superstition, nonetheless not all of them are such for undoubtedly there do exist genuine traditions amongst them, and the commentators too, whilst interpreting the above verses, have attested to this fact.

ʿAllāmah Majlisī, the great scholar of traditions has presented many traditions in this regard in his book *Biḥārul Anwār*.[171]

There are a few points that briefly need to be mentioned here: In a number of traditions, auspicious and inauspicious days have been interpreted in connection with the events that have transpired on those days. For example, in a tradition from the Commander of the Faithful ﷺ we read that a person sought to know from him, which was the Wednesday that the people considered to be inauspicious? The Imām ﷺ replied: That is the last Wednesday of the month which occurs during the waning of the moon. It was on this day that

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the term يوم has been annexed to نحس and does not possess the descriptive meaning. However, with reference to the context of the above verse, we have to admit that in this case, the noun has been annexed to the adjective.

[170] *Sūratul Dukhān* (44), Verse 3

[171] *Biḥārul Anwār*, vol. 59, Chapter al-Samā wa al-Āʿlam, pg. 1 to 91

Qābīl killed his brother Hābīl ... And on this day of Wednesday, Allāh sent the windstorm over the people of ʿĀd.[172]

And therefore, numerous commentators, on the basis of abundant traditions, have declared the last Wednesday of the month to be inauspicious and refer to it as:

أَلأَرْبِعَاءُ لاَ تَدُورُ.

"The Wednesday that shall never recur."

Some other traditions declare the first day of the month to be auspicious and blessed since Ādam ﷺ was created on that day, and similarly for the 26th day of the month, for Allāh ﷻ had split the sea asunder for Mūsā ﷺ on that day.[173]

A few state that the third day of the month is inauspicious for on that day Ādam and Eve were expelled from Paradise, and the clothes of Paradise were taken away from them.[174]

Others claim that the seventh day is a blessed one, for on that day Nūḥ ﷺ climbed aboard his ship (and was delivered from the flood).[175]

Or what we read in connection with Nawroz, in a tradition from Imām as-Ṣādiq ﷺ, when he said: "It is a blessed day since it was on this day that Nūḥ's ﷺ ark came to rest upon the (Mount) Jūdī, Jibrāʾīl descended upon the Noble Prophet ﷺ, ʿAlī ﷺ climbed upon the shoulders of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and destroyed the idols of the Kaʿbah, and the event of Ghadīr Khum took place..."[176]

Such interpretations, which tend to correlate auspicious and inauspicious days with desirable and undesirable events, are mentioned many times in narrations. This is especially observed with respect to the day of ʿĀshūra because the Umayyads,

172 *Tafsīr Nūrul Thaqalaīn*, vol. 5, pg. 183, no. 25
173 *Tafsīr Nūrul Thaqalaīn*, vol. 5, pg. 105
174 Ibid., pg. 58
175 Ibid., pg. 61
176 *Biḥārul Anwār*, vol. 59, pg. 92

considering themselves to be victorious over the Ahlul Bayt عليهم السلام, regarded it as an auspicious day – a concept that has been prohibited in no uncertain terms in the traditions. Traditions forbid people to regard it as a blessed day and also warn them that this day should not be considered to be a day for hoarding the provisions of the year; in fact, trade should be stopped on that day and one should practically distance oneself from the scheme of the Umayyads.

Collectively, these traditions have led some people to be of the opinion that Islam intends to draw the attention of the Muslims towards these incidents so that they learn from these events with respect to their deeds, and distance themselves from destructive episodes and those who were involved in them.

This interpretation could be true with respect to some traditions, but undoubtedly this is not so for all of them since, from some of the traditions, it can be inferred that occasionally, in some of these days, there exists a mysterious influence of which we are not aware.

Another point which demands attention is that some people carry the issue of auspicious and inauspicious days to such extremes that before attempting any task, they wait for such days and, in the process, lag behind in numerous activities and let golden opportunities slip out of their hands.

Or that instead of investigating the causes of the successes and failures of themselves and others, and benefiting from the invaluable experiences, they thrust the blame of all failures upon the inauspicious of the days, just as they search for the secret of successes in the blessed days!

This is a kind of escapism from reality, extremism in the issue and a superstitious explanation for life's events – something that ought to be intensely avoided. In such issues, attention should not be paid to the hearsays amongst the people, the words of the astrologers or the fortune tellers. If something in this regard is established by means of authentic traditions, it must be accepted but if not, then, with scant regard for the words of every Tom, Dick and Harry, one

ought to continue one's life, advance firmly by means of one's efforts and hard work, and rely upon Allāh and seek His help.

Attention towards auspicious and inauspicious of days, in addition to guiding man towards a series of didactic historical events, also serves to make him mindful of Allāh ﷻ and turn to Him for assistance. It is for this reason we read in the traditions: On the days that have been branded as inauspicious, you can, after giving charity or reciting supplications or seeking Allāh's ﷻ help or reciting some of the verses of the Noble Qurʾān and placing your reliance on Allāh ﷻ, pursue your work and emerge successful.

In a tradition we read that one of the companions of Imām Ḥasan ʿAskarī ؑ came to meet him on a Tuesday, whereupon the Imām ؑ said: "I did not see you yesterday."

The man replied: "Yesterday was a Monday and I was disinclined to move out on this day!" The Imām ؑ replied: "One who desires to remain protected from the evils of Monday, should recite Sūrat Hal Atā in the first rakʿat of his morning prayer." The Imam then recited this verse from Sūrat Hal Atā (which bears relation to warding away the evils.)[177]

﴿ فَوَقَاهُمُ اللّٰهُ شَرَّ ذٰلِکَ الْيَوْمِ ﴾

"Therefore Allāh will guard them from the evil of that day and cause them to meet with ease and happiness."

It has been reported in another tradition that one of the companions of the sixth Imām ؑ asked him: "Is it appropriate to embark upon a journey on the abominable days like Wednesday or other like days?"

The Imām ؑ replied: "Commence your journey by giving charity, recite Ayatul Kursī when you intend to start out (and then proceed wherever you desire."[178]

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[177] *Biḥārul Anwār*, vol. 59, pg. 39, no. 7

[178] Ibid., pg. 28

It has been reported in a tradition that a companion of Imām ʿAlī ibne Muḥammad al-Hādi عليه السلام says: "I arrived in the presence of the Imām عليه السلام in such a state that while on the way, I had wounded my finger, a rider had collided with me injuring my shoulder, and I had got entangled in the midst of a multitude and my garments were torn." I exclaimed: "O' Day! May Allāh protect me from your evil! What an evil day you are! Having heard this, the Imām عليه السلام admonished him: "You are associated with us and yet you utter such things? You consider the day to be an offender when it has committed no offense?"

The narrator says: Hearing these words, I came to my senses and, realizing my mistake, said to him عليه السلام: "O' My Master! I am repentant and seek Allāh's forgiveness. The Imām عليه السلام added: "What crime have the days committed that you consider them to be inauspicious; it is only the consequences of your own deeds that come to afflict you in these days?"

The narrator says: "I shall continually seek forgiveness of Allāh and this shall be my repentance, O' Son of the Prophet of Allāh!"

The Imām عليه السلام said: "This shall not prove beneficial for you; Allāh shall punish you for reproaching something that did not deserve reproach. Don't you know that Allāh rewards and punishes, and shall recompense the deeds in this world and the Hereafter. He عليه السلام then added: Henceforth do not repeat this act and do not ascribe any effects to the days vis-à-vis Allāh's rulings!"[179]

This profound tradition alludes to the fact that even if the days happen to possess an influence, it is only upon the orders of Allāh. Never should they be looked upon as possessing an independent influence and never should one be looked upon as being independent of Allāh's grace.

[179] *Tuḥaf al-ʿUqūl*, as quoted in *Biḥārul Anwār*, vol. 59, pg. 2 (with a slight abridgment).

Thus, one should not associate the occurrence of events, which mainly possess an expiatory aspect with respect to man's wrongful deeds, with the influence of the days and in this manner attempt to exonerate oneself. This explanation is perhaps the best way to resolve the conflict between the various traditions that exist in this regard.[180]

## 38. Is the incident of the 'People of the Cave' corroborated by present-day science?

It is possible that some people might harbour scepticism regarding the protracted sleep of the People of the Cave which had extended for years, and consider it to be incompatible with scientific standards and thus look upon it as a myth or legend, since:

Firstly: Such a long life of several hundred years is unlikely for those who are awake, let alone those who are in a state of sleep!

Secondly: Even if we were to accept the possibility of such a long life for one who is awake, it would be inconceivable for one who is asleep. This is because, in this case, the issue of food and nutrition comes to the fore; how is it possible for a person to remain alive for such a long period without food and water? If, supposedly, we were to assume to need one kilo of food and one litre of water per day, more than a hundred tons of food and a hundred thousand litres of water would be required for the life of the People of the Cave, and storing this quantity of food and water within the body is impossible.

Thirdly: Even if we were to overlook all of these, yet, the problem which surfaces is that the stationing of a body under monotonous conditions for such a lengthy period of time harms its physical organism and causes great wastages.

At first glance, these objections might appear to be insurmountable obstacles in the path of this issue. However this is not so, since:

[180] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 23, pg. 41

Firstly: The issue of a lengthy life is not one that is unscientific, for we are aware that according to science, the life-span of no living entity possesses fixed and stipulated standards such that when the moment that is reached, death is inevitable.

In other words, while it is true that the physical strengths of man are finite and limited, this does not mean that the body of a man or another living entity does not possess the strength and ability to live longer than what is normal. It does not mean that just as water begins to boil when its temperature is raised to 100 degrees and turns to ice when it is lowered to zero, man likewise, when he reaches the age of a hundred or a hundred and fifty years, his heart necessarily ceases to function and he dies.

Rather, the life-span of living entities is related to the state of their lives, and is completely changeable by altering the lifestyle. A living testimony for this is that on the one hand none of the scientists of the world have set a definite scale for the life of man, while on the other, in the laboratories they have been successful to occasionally increase the longevity of living entities two fold or even several times, and at times increasing it twelve times over. They even assure us that in the future, by means of new scientific techniques, the life-span of man would increase several times more than his present one. The above discussion was in connection with the basic issue of longevity.

Secondly: As far as the issue of food and water during this prolonged sleep is concerned, had this been an ordinary and normal sleep, we would have accepted the protestor's objection, for then, the issue would have been incompatible with the basic scientific principles. This is because, despite the fact that the metabolic activity of the body in a state of sleep is much lower than that during wakefulness, however, collectively and over several years it would be very great. However it must be realized that in the world of nature there exist certain states of sleep - in which food consumption is extremely trivial - such as hibernation.

## HIBERNATION

There are numerous animals which sleep all through the winter and undergo what is scientifically referred to as hibernation.

In this kind of sleep, the arterial activities almost come to a standsuntil with only an extremely feeble flame of them remaining alight. The heart almost stops beating, or to state it more correctly, its beatings become so feeble and inconspicuous that it can hardly be sensed.

In such conditions, the body can be compared to a large furnace, which, when turned off, has its pilot light left burning. It is evident that the daily fuel requirement of that furnace for keeping its towering flames alight could possibly cater to the fuel requirements for tens or hundreds of years of that intensely small pilot light (of course, this is dependent upon the flames of the furnace and that of the pilot light).

In connection with the hibernation of some of the animals, the scientists state as follows:

If we were to draw out a frog in hibernation, it would appear dead - its lungs contain no air and its heartbeats are so feeble so as to be imperceptible. Numerous butterflies, insects, earth snails and reptiles are some of the cold-blooded animals that undergo hibernation. Some of the warm-blooded mammals too undergo hibernation. During hibernation, arterial activities greatly decrease and the fat that has been stored in their bodies is slowly consumed.[181]

Thus, we have a kind of sleep in which the need for food and nutrition is extraordinarily reduced and the principal activities of the body almost come to a standsuntil. Incidentally, this very issue assists to prevent the wear and tear of the organs, and adds to the life of these animals. Essentially hibernation for these animals,

[181] An extract from the book *Farhangnameh*, under 'zimistānkhwābi'

which are apparently unable to procure their food during winter, is an invaluable opportunity.

## ANOTHER EXAMPLE: BURIAL OF THE AZTECS

It has also been observed in the case of Aztecs, that some of them are placed within a coffin before the unbelieving eyes of the amazed onlookers, and at times, buried for a period of even one week. After the conclusion of the period they are taken out and provided massage and artificial respiration in order to help them slowly return to normalcy.

Even if the need for food during this period can be considered to be unimportant, the need for oxygen would surely be vital, for we are aware of the sensitivity of the cerebral cells, especially with respect to oxygen. Their need for this vital element is so great that should they remain deprived of it even for a few minutes, they would perish. Now, how is it that the Aztecs endures the lack of oxygen for, say, a period of around one week?

In the light of the explanation presented by us, the answer to this question is not very difficult. During this period, the principal activities of the body of the ascetic almost comes to a standsuntil as a result of which, the oxygen requirement and consumption of the cells is drastically reduced to such an extent that the air trapped within the coffin is sufficient for nourishing the cells of his body for one whole week!

## FREEZING THE BODY OF A LIVING PERSON

In connection with the issue of freezing the body of animals and even man (for lengthening their life-spans), there exist numerous theories and discussions, some of which have already been realized.

According to these theories it is possible, by placing the body of a man or an animal in sub-zero temperatures below using a special technique, to halt his life without him actually dying and after a period, when necessary, subject him to a suitable temperature and again bring him back to his normal state!

For space travels to far-flung planets which could probably take hundreds or thousands of years, several proposals have been presented, one of them being the idea that the body of the astronaut should be placed in a special container and frozen, and upon nearing the planet under consideration, the temperature within the container should be restored to normal by means of an automatic system. This would cause the astronauts to return to their normal states without having aged!

A leading science magazine reported that recently a book, written by Robert Nielson in connection with freezing the body of man for achieving a long life, has been published and has drawn widespread response in the scientific world.

In an article written in the abovementioned magazine and devoted to this issue, it has been asserted that lately, a new field of science has emerged which deals with this very topic. The article states: "All through the ages, possessing an eternal life has always been one of the deep-rooted and golden dreams of man; however, this dream has presently turned into a reality and is indebted to the wonderful advancements achieved in a new science called cryogenics (a science, which takes man to the icy worlds, preserving him as a frozen body in the hope of a day when scientists return him to life again.)"

Is this logic feasible? Numerous distinguished scientists are working on the issue from various dimensions, and publications such as Life and Esquire, and also newspapers all over the world have intensely debated this concept; and more significant is the fact that a programme is being implemented at this present moment.[182]

Recently, the newspapers reported that amidst the polar ices - which, as shown by their layers, date back to several thousand years - a frozen fish was found, which, when placed in water of room temperature sprang to life again and began moving around!

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[182] The magazine *Daanishmand*, month of Bahman, Number 47, pg. 4

It is clear that while frozen the vital systems, unlike during death, do not entirely cease to function, but only become extraordinarily slack.

From all these discussions we infer that it is possible to bring life to a standsuntil or to an extraordinary state of slackness – a possibility, which has been attested by various scientific studies.

In such a state, the consumption of food by the being is almost reduced to zero as a result of which, the small reserves that exist within the body can be sufficient for maintaining its slow life for several long years.

However, the above explanation should not be mistaken to mean that we wish to deny the miraculous nature of the sleep of the People of the Cave; rather, we desire to facilitate a better comprehension of the occurrence by means of scientific explanations.

This is because, without any doubt, the sleep of the People of the Cave was not a common and ordinary sleep like our daily sleep; it was a sleep that was indeed exceptional in nature. Thus, there is no room for astonishment that they (by Allāh's orders) had drifted into a protracted slumber, neither suffering from lack of nutrition nor their physical organs suffering any harm!

Interestingly, from the verses of Sūratul Kahf which relate their story, it appears that their sleep differed vastly from normal sleep:

﴿ وَ تَحْسَبُهُمْ أَيْقَاظاً وَ هُمْ رُقُودٌ ... لَوِ اطَّلَعْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَوَلَّيْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِرَاراً وَ لَمُلِئْتَ مِنْهُمْ رُعْباً ﴾

"And you might think them awake while they were asleep...if you looked at them you would certainly turn back from them in flight, and you would certainly be filled with awe because of them."[183]

[183] *Sūratul Kahf* (18), Verse 18

This verse is indicative of the fact that they were not overcome by an ordinary sleep; rather, they slept – in a manner that made them resemble a dead person – with their eyes kept open!

In addition, the Qurʾān says: The sunrays did not enter their cave. And considering the fact that their cave was possibly located on one of the altitudes of Asia Minor in a chilly location, the exceptional nature of their sleep becomes all the more manifest.

On the other hand, the Qurʾān says:

﴿ وَ نُقَلِّبُهُمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَ ذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ ﴾

"And We turned them about to the right and to the left."[184]

This reveals that they were not in an entirely monotonous state; mysterious elements, which are suntil unknown to us, would turn them on their sides alternatively (possibly once in a year) so that their bodies do not suffer harm.

Now that this scientific discussion has become sufficiently clear, drawing inference from it with respect to the topic of Resurrection would not demand a detailed discussion for waking up after a prolonged sleep is not totally unlike coming to life after death, and serves to facilitate a better comprehension of the possibility and occurrence of Resurrection.[185 and 186]

## 39. What is intended by the seven Heavens?

There are seven verses in the Noble Qurʾān which speak of سماوات سبع (seven heavens).

From amongst all the various interpretations that have been mentioned in this regard, the interpretation which appears to be most applicable is that سماوات سبع means exactly what it states: The seven heavens; however, heaven does not mean planets, but rather

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[184] Ibid.

[185] For further explanation in this regard, refer the book *Maʿad Wa Jahān Pas Az Marg*.

[186] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 12, pg. 406

the entire collection of stars and celestial objects of the upper world; and seven is the number and an allegorical expression denoting multiplicity.

However, from other verses of the Qurʾān it can be deduced that all the stars, planets, galaxies and nebulae that we observe are all associated with the collection of the first heaven. Accordingly, beyond this gigantic collection that we witness, there exist six other colossal collections (six heavens) - each one greater than the other - which are beyond the reach of human knowledge (at least for the present).

In verse 6 of Sūratul Ṣāffāt, we read:

﴿ إِنَّا زَيَّنَّا السَّمَآءَ الدُّنْيَا بِزِينَةٍ الْكَوَاكِبِ ﴾

"Surely We have adorned the nearest heaven with an adornment, the stars."

Verse 12 of Sūratul Fuṣṣilat says:

﴿ وَ زَيَّنَّا السَّمَآءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحَ ﴾

"...and We adorned the lower heaven with brilliant stars."

And this very meaning, albeit with a slight difference, has also been mentioned in verse 5 of Sūratul Mulk.

Interesting to note is the fact that the late ʿAllāmah Majlisī has also mentioned this as one of the interpretations of the verse. In his book *Biḥārul Anwār*, he states: The third probability that strikes my mind is that all the firmaments that have been established for the celestial objects are referred to as the 'lower heaven'![187]

It is true that our present day scientific instruments have been unable to uncover the other six worlds as yet. However, as far as science is concerned, there is no evidence to deny their existence;

[187] *Biḥārul Anwār*, vol. 55, pg. 78

and it is quite probable that this enigma shall be solved in the future.

In fact, discoveries of some astronomers indicate signs of the existence of other worlds, at this present moment. This is similar to the statement released by the renowned Palomar Observatory in connection with the enormity of the universe and that which we have previously presented. The portion of it, which substantiates our words, states:

By means of the telescope of the Palomar Observatory  millions of new galaxies have been discovered, some of which are at a distance of a thousand million light years from us. However, beyond the distance of a thousand million light years, a gigantic, dark and dreadful space meets the eye within which nothing can be seen and observed. But undoubtedly, within that dark and dreadful space there exist hundreds of millions of galaxies, such that the world on our side is held together in place by the gravitational force of those galaxies. This entire gigantic universe, which meets our eyes and possesses hundreds of thousands of millions of galaxies, is nothing but a small and trivial speck in comparison to a more gigantic universe ... and we are not yet certain that beyond that second universe there does not exist yet another universe![188]

Another scientist, in a detailed article written in connection with the enormity of the world of existence, after discussing the vast and astounding distances between the galaxies and presenting stupendous figures, all of which were in terms of light years, says: Until this juncture, the astronomers are of the opinion that presently they have only managed to proceed halfway towards the 'visible' fringes of the colossal universe ... they suntil need to seek out the undiscovered space![189]

[188] *Majallāh Fadhā*, Number 56, month of Farwardeen, 351

[189] *Newsweek*, year 1964. (It should not be forgotten that this testimony is related to 24 years earlier.)

Thus, the worlds that have opened up before man - despite all their enormity - constitute just a mere speck of this gigantic universe, and can be reconciled with the issue of the seven heavens.[190]

## 40. Is the annihilation of the solar system during the countdown towards the Day of Judgment consistent with our present-day knowledge?

In the first verse of Sūratul Takwīr, regarding the issue of Resurrection, we read:

﴿ إِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ وَ إِذَا النُّجُومُ انْكَدَرَتْ ﴾

"When the sun is covered and when the stars darken."

In view of the above verses, the question that looms up is: Is the dying out of the sun and ... consistent with the present day knowledge?

Primarily it ought to be realized that although the sun, a life-giving hub of this system of ours, is a mediocre and average star in comparison to other celestial stars per se, and in comparison to the earth, it is extraordinarily gigantic – its volume, according to studies conducted by the scientists, being one million and three hundred thousand times that of the earth. However, since it is at a distance of one hundred and fifty million kilometres from us, it is seen in its present size.

It is sufficient, for the purpose of personifying the greatness and expansiveness of the sun, to know that if the earth and the moon were to be placed within the sun at the same distance as they presently possess, the moon would very comfortably revolve around the earth without even moving out of the periphery of the sun!

The surface temperature of the sun is said to be in excess of six thousand degrees centigrade while its internal temperature is determined to be several million degrees!

[190] *Tafsīr Payām-e-Qur'an*, vol. 2, pg. 179

If we wish to mention its weight in terms of tonnes, we would have to follow up the figure ‘2’ with twenty seven zeroes (two billion billion billion tonnes)!

Towering flames leap outwards from the surface of the sun to a distance of more than one hundred and sixty thousand kilometres – a distance within which the earth could easily get lost, since the diameter of the earth is no more than twelve thousand kilometres.

The source of heat and light energy of the sun, contrary to what some imagine, is not due to burning; according to George Gamuf, as stated in his book (translated in Persian in the name of) *Paidaish Wa Marg-e-Khurshīd*, had the sun been created entirely of anthracite and had it been set alight during the time of the first Pharaoh of Egypt, it should have been totally burnt up by now, leaving behind nothing but ashes. Assume any other fuel in place of anthracite and you would be facing this same dilemma.

The reality is that it is incorrect to associate the concept of ‘burning’ with the sun; its energy is obtained by means of atomic fission and we are aware that this energy is extraordinarily intense and great. Thus, the atoms of the sun are in a state of perpetual decomposition, radiation and transformation into energy, and, according to the calculations of scientists, every passing second reduces it by four million tonnes! However, its volume is so monumental that the passage of thousands of years has not affected it in the least and apparently, not the slightest change occurs in its state.

However, it ought to be realized that in the long run, this very aspect would lead to its extinction; this gigantic mass would eventually become smaller and less bright until finally it would lose all its light – this being true for all the other stars too.[191]

Thus, what has been mentioned in the above verses, in connection with the dying down of the sun and the annihilation of the stars, is a

[191] An extract from the book *Paidaish Wa Marg-e-Khurshīd*, *Nujūm-e-Bi Telescope*, and *Sākhtimān-e-Khurshīd*

reality which is entirely consistent with present day knowledge; and the Qurʾān mentioned these realities at a time when none knew of these issues - neither in the Arabian Peninsula nor in the then-scholarly circles of the world.[192]

## 41. What is magic and how does Islam view it?

There are numerous opinions regarding the question of 'what is magic' and 'when did it come into existence'? Nevertheless, it is evident that magic has been prevalent amongst people since ancient times, but the exact date of its origin is unknown; in addition, it is also not known as to who was the first person to have brought it into existence.

However, with respect to its meaning and essence, it can be said that magic is a kind of supernatural act which has an impact on men; at times it is a kind of jugglery and sleight of hand, while on other occasions it is just psychological and imaginary.

According to the dictionary, magic has two meanings:

Deception, guile, sleight of hand and legerdemain; and according to the book *Qāmus al-Lughah*, magic means 'to deceive'.

كُلُّ ماَ لَطُفَ وَ دَقَّ.

"All such things, the causes of which are invisible and mysterious."

In Rāghib's book *al-Mufradāt*, which is devoted to analysing words appearing in the Qurʾān, three meanings have been mentioned for it:

a. Deception and imaginations, which are devoid of reality - like sleight of hand.

b. Attracting the Satans by special means and seeking assistance from them.

And there is another meaning that some have been given to imagine and that is: It is possible to transform the essence and form of

[192] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 26, pg. 185

people or entities by certain means; for example, transforming man by means of it, into an animal. However, this kind is nothing more than mere fancy, and without an iota of reality.[193]

Studying the 51 instances of the usage of the word سحر (magic) and its derivatives in the chapters of the Noble Qurʾān, such as Ṭāhā, Shuʿarā, Yūnus, Aʿrāf, etc., in connection with the stories of the prophets Mūsā ﷵ, ʿIsā ﷵ and the Noble Prophet ﷺ, we conclude that magic, according to the Qurʾān, can be classified into two categories:

Those instances wherein the objective is deception, jugglery, sleight of hand and legerdemain and possesses no reality, as we read:

﴿ فَإِذَا حِبَالُهُمْ وَ عِصِيُّهُم يُخَيَّلُ إِلَيهِ مِنْ سِحْرِهِمْ أَنَّهَا تَسْعَىٰ ﴾

"Then lo! their cords and their rods-- it was imaged to him on account of their magic as if they were running."[194]

Another verse says:

﴿ فَلَمَّا أَلْقَوا سَحَرُوا أَعيُنَ النَّاسِ وَ اسْتَرْهَبُوهُمْ ﴾

"So when they cast, they deceived the people's eyes and frightened them, and they produced a mighty enchantment."[195]

From these verses it can be ascertained that magic does not possess any reality such that it could exert control over things, and leave an impact and influence upon them. Rather, it is jugglery of the magicians that gives the impression of magic.

From some of the verses of the Qurʾān it can be inferred that certain kinds of magic do yield an influence, such as this verse, which says:

﴿ فَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مِنْهُمَا مَا يُفَرِّقُونَ بِهِ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَ زَوْجِهِ ﴾

[193] *al-Mufradāt* of Rāghib (سحر)

[194] *Sūrat Ṭāhā* (20), Verse 66

[195] *Sūratul Aʿrāf* (7), Verse 116

"Even then men learned from these two, magic by which they might cause a separation between a man and his wife."[196]

Another verse of the Qurʾān says that they learned things that were detrimental to them and not at all beneficial.

﴿ وَ يَتَعَلَّمُونَ ما يَضُرُّهُمْ وَ لاَ يَنْفَعُهُمْ ﴾

"And they learned what harmed them and did not profit them."[197]

But, are the effects of magic purely psychological or can it possess a physical impact too? The above verses possess no allusion to this, and hence some are of the opinion that the effects of magic are purely psychological in nature.

At this juncture it is essential to mention another point: It appears that a considerable portion of magic was enacted by making use of certain physical and chemical properties, and performed with the intention of defrauding simple-minded people.

For example, we read in history that the magicians of the time of Mūsā عليه السلام used to place some special chemical substances within their cords and staffs (possibly mercury or some like substance) which, as a result of sunshine or under the influence of a heating apparatus that they had devised under them, would come out in motion and the spectators would be given to imagine that they had come to life. Such kinds of sorcery, even in our times, are not rare.

## MAGIC, IN THE EYES OF ISLAM

In this regard, all the Islamic jurists have declared the learning and practicing of magic to be prohibited.

Furthermore, we present some traditions that have been narrated from the Imāms عليهم السلام and which have been reported in authentic books.

Imām ʿAlī عليه السلام says:

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[196] *Sūratul Baqarah* (2), Verse 102

[197] Ibid.

مَنْ تَعَلَّمَ شَيْئاً مِنَ السِّحْرِ قَليلاً أَو كَثِيراً فَقَدْ كَفَرَ وَ كَانَ آخِرُ عَهْدِهِ بِرَبِّهِ.

"One who learns magic, less or more, has become an infidel and his association with Allāh is completely severed."[198]

However, as we have mentioned, if it is for the purpose of nullifying the sorcery of the sorcerers, then there is no harm in it. Rather, at times, on the basis of general obligation (wājib kifāʾi) some individuals must necessarily learn it so that they can nullify the sorcery of a false claimant (to prophethood), should he desire to mislead the people by means of sorcery, and thus lay bare his lies and false claims. And testifying to this is a tradition of Imām as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام, which states that one of the magicians, who used to take money for performing his magic, approached the Imām عليه السلام and said: Sorcery had been my profession; I would take money for it and in this manner managed to meet the expenses of my life. I even performed the Ḥajj by means of this income, however now I have abandoned it and have repented. Is there a way for me to achieve deliverance? The Imām عليه السلام replied: Open the knots of magic but do not tie the knots of sorcery.[199]

From this tradition it can be inferred that it is permissible to learn and practice magic if it is for the purpose of nullifying the (evil) effects of magic.[200]

## 42. What is the aim of Taqiyyah (Dissimulation)?

It is true that, at times, man is prepared to sacrifice his dear life for the sake of lofty causes - safeguarding honour, supporting the truth and exterminating falsehood - but can any sane and intellectual person permit man to imperil his life for an unimportant cause and objective?

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198 *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿa*, Chapter 25 from the chapters of Mā Yuktasabu bihi, no. 7
199 *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿa*, Chapter 25 from the chapters of Mā Yuktasabu bihi, no. 1
200 *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 1, pg. 377

## TAQIYYAH - A DEFENSIVE SHIELD

Islam has explicitly permitted that when a person's life, wealth or honour is in danger and manifestation of the Truth yields no significant benefit, he should refrain from manifesting it, and continue to fulfill his responsibilities secretly and in a concealed manner - as the Qurʾān has indicated in verse 28 of Sūrat Āle ʿImrān or in verse 106 of Sūratul Naḥl, when it says:

﴿ إِلاَّ مَنْ أُكْرِهَ وَ قَلْبُهُ مُطْمَئِنٌّ بِالْإِيْمَانِ ﴾

"Except he, who is compelled while his heart is at rest on account of faith."

History and the books of Islamic traditions have not forgotten the story of ʿAmmār and his parents and how they had fallen into the clutches of the idolaters, who subjected them to intense persecutions in order that they disown Islam. ʿAmmār's parents refused and were killed by the polytheists, but ʿAmmār uttered what they wished to hear and then, weeping out of Allāh's fear, hastened towards the Noble Prophet ﷺ, who consoled him by saying:

إِنْ عَادُوا لَكَ فَعِدْ لَهُمْ.

"If they seize you again, say out what they desire you to speak out, and in this manner put his anxiety to rest."

The point that needs to be taken into complete regard is that taqiyyah does not possess one ruling on all occasions - at times it becomes compulsory while on occasions it becomes prohibited while there are instances when it is permissible to either adopt it or decline it.

Taqiyyah becomes obligatory when a person's life is endangered for no important benefit, however, when taqiyyah becomes a cause for the promotion of falsehood, deviation of people and strengthening of tyranny, it is unacceptable.

And it is on this basis that all the objections leveled in connection with this issue shall be answered. If the faultfinders were to have conducted a study in this regard, they would have concluded that the Shīʿites are not alone in this belief since the issue of taqiyyah, per se, is a categorically rational ruling and in accordance with the natural disposition of man.[201]

This is because, when the wise and intelligent people of the world find themselves at a cross road wherein they have to either disregard manifesting their internal beliefs or manifest them and in the process place their lives, wealth and honour in peril, they take stock of the situation. If the manifestation of their beliefs is in an instance which deserves the sacrifice of one's life, wealth and reputation, they regard such a sacrifice as correct, but if they do not perceive great effects and benefits in performing such an act, they refrain from revealing their beliefs.

## TAQIYYAH – A CHANGE IN THE FORM OF COMBAT

In the course of religious, social and political struggles, there are times when, if the defenders of a right cause were to engage in a manifest combat, they, as well as their cause would either be obliterated or in the very least, find themselves in jeopardy – like the state of the Shīʿites of ʿAlī عليه السلام during the period of the rule of the usurper Umayyads. In such situations, the correct and rational way is to refrain from uselessly squandering one's forces and to embark upon an indirect combat to advance towards the achievement of the sacred objectives. In reality, taqiyyah, for such sects and their followers in such circumstances, can be looked upon as a kind of change of form of combat, which would save them from destruction and grant them success in the continuation of their struggle. It is not known what plan those who totally reject taqiyyah have to present for such situations? What is better – to be destroyed or to carry on the struggle in a logical and correct form?

[201] An extract from the book *Āīn-e-Mā*, pg. 364

The former is something which none can recommend, while the latter is nothing but taqiyyah itself.[202]

The true Muslims, the protégés of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, possessed an astonishing spirit of endurance against the enemies. Some of them, such as ʿAmmār's father, despite the fact that their hearts were replete with faith in Allāh and love for the Noble Prophet ﷺ were unwilling to utter even one sentence that was to the liking of the enemies, and even gave up their lives in the way of Allāh.

And some, like ʿAmmār himself, who were willing to utter the sentence, considered themselves to be accountable for the act and were so overcome with dread that until the Noble Prophet ﷺ reassured them that the act adopted by them as a tactic to save their lives had been totally permitted according to the religious laws, they did not attain ease and tranquility of mind!

Regarding Bilāl we read that when he embraced Islam, and then courageously stood up to defend it and support the Noble Prophet ﷺ, the polytheists subjected him to immense persecution, to the extent that they would drag him under the hot and scorching sun, place a large boulder upon his chest and say to him: Disbelieve in Allāh.

He refused to give in to their demands and, almost on the verge of death, he would repeatedly say: أحد أحد (He is the One Allāh, He is the One Allāh). He would then say: By Allāh! Had I known of an utterance that was more distasteful to you than this, I would have surely uttered it (before you!)[203]

About Ḥabīb ibne Zayd Anṣārī we read that Mūsāilamah, the Liar, upon capturing him, questioned him: "Do you testify that Muḥammad is the prophet of Allāh?" Ḥabīb replied: "Yes." He then asked: "Do you testify that I am the prophet of Allāh." Ḥabīb, by way of ridicule and mockery, said: "I do not hear what you say."

[202] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 2, pg. 373
[203] The commentary *In the Shade of the Qur'an*, vol. 5, pg. 284

Mūsāilamah and his followers cut him up into pieces, but Ḥabīb stood as firm and steadfast as a mountain.[204]

There are numerous examples of such shocking instances in the history of Islam - especially during the life of the early Muslims and the companions of the Imāms of the Ahlul Bayt ﵈.

It is for this reason that scholars have declared that in such instances, non-observance of taqiyyah and non-submission before the enemies is permissible, despite the fact that it could result in one's death. This is because the aim is to hold aloft the flag of Unity and monotheism, and ensure the superiority of Islam, and this was an issue that possessed special importance, especially during the initial stages of the Noble Prophet's ﷺ invitation towards Islam.

Despite this, there is no doubt that observing taqiyyah in such cases is permissible, while in cases that are less severe that this, it becomes obligatory. And contrary to what some ignorant individuals are wont to imagine, taqiyyah is neither a sign of weakness, and nor is it fear of the great number of enemies in the face of pressure. Rather, taqiyyah can be viewed as a calculated tactic for protecting the forces and preventing useless loss of believers for the sake of issues that are inconsequential.

It is a common practice all over the world that a small combating minority, in an effort to overthrow an oppressive, selfish and tyrannical majority, chiefly employ the strategy of concealment. They establish an underground group, possess secret plans and on numerous occasions they take up for themselves the appearance of others; even when arrested, they try their very best to ensure that their true acts are not divulged so that they do not lose their forces uselessly and keep them reserved for the continuation of their struggle.

No intellect ever permits that in such situations, the soldiers, who are in a minority, openly manifest themselves and thus get easily

[204] Ibid.

identified and detected by the enemy and are subsequently exterminated.

It is for this reason that before being an Islamic strategy, taqiyyah is a logical tactic for all those people, who oppose and combat a strong enemy.

We observe that in the Islamic traditions too, taqiyyah has been compared to a defensive shield. Imām as-Ṣādiq ﷺ says:

التَّقِيَّةُ تُرْسُ الْمُؤْمِنِ وَ التَّقِيَّةُ حِرْزُ الْمُؤْمِنِ.

"Taqiyyah is a believer's shield and a means for his protection."[205]

(Do note that taqiyyah has been compared to a shield, and a shield is a tool that is only employed in the battlefield while fighting the enemy for the purpose of protecting the revolutionary forces.)

And if we observe that in Islamic traditions taqiyyah has been regarded as a symbol of religion, indicative of faith and nine parts out of a total collection of ten parts of religion, it is for this very reason.

Of course, the topic of taqiyyah is a very vast one and this is not the place for dwelling upon it in detail. The only aim of presenting the above discussion was to clarify that the criticisms which some have leveled against this issue, is indicative of their ignorance of the conditions of taqiyyah and the philosophy that lies behind it.

Undoubtedly, there are instances when practicing taqiyyah is prohibited; this is when taqiyyah, instead of serving to protect the forces leads to their destruction or imperils the religion or brings about a great evil. In such cases taqiyyah ought to be disregarded and the consequences, whatever they might be, must be tackled head on.[206]

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[205] *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿa*, vol. 11, no. 6, Chapter 24 from the chapters of ʿAmr Bil Maʿrūf

[206] *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 11, pg. 423

## 43. What is the myth Of Gharāniq or 'The Satanic Verses'?

A story has been narrated in this regard, which has become popular as the story of Gharāniq. According to this story, the Noble Prophet ﷺ had been engaged in reciting Sūratul Najm in front of the polytheists. When he had recited this verse:

﴿ أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ اللاَّتَ وَ الْعُزَّى وَ مَنَاةَ الثَّالِثَةَ الْأُخْرَىٰ ﴾

"Have you then considered the Lat and the ʿUzza; and Manāt, the third, the last?"[207], the Satan caused him ﷺ to recite the following two sentences (which were not part of Sūrah) too:

تِلْكَ الْغَرَانِيقُ الْعُلْيَ وَ إِنَّ شَفَاعَتَهُنَّ لَتُرْجَىٰ.

"They are beautiful, high-ranking birds, and their intercession is anticipated."[208]

Hearing this, the polytheists were absolutely thrilled and said: (Muḥammad), until today, had never spoken nicely of our Gods. At that moment the Noble Prophet ﷺ went into prostration and they too prostrated. All the polytheists of the Quraish were ecstatic and then went their ways, but shortly later Jibrāʾīl descended and informed him ﷺ: I had not brought for you those two sentences! These were of the inspirations of the Satan!

The following verse was then revealed which cautioned the Noble Prophet ﷺ and the believers[209]:

﴿ وَ مَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ وَ لاَ نَبِيٍّ إِلاَّ إِذَا تَمَنَّىٰ أَلْقَى الشَّيْطَانُ فِي أُمْنِيَّتِهِ فَيَنْسَخُ اللّٰهُ مَا يُلْقِي الشَّيْطَانُ ثُمَّ يُحْكِمُ اللّٰهُ آيَاتِهِ

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207 *Sūratul Najm* (53), Verse 19, 20

208 غرانيق is the plural of غرنوق - a kind of water bird that is white or black in colour. There are other meanings too that have been mentioned (for this word) (as quoted from *Qāmus al-Lugah*).

209 Most of the distinguished commentators have reported this tradition although with a little difference, and have subjected it to a critical examination.

وَ اللّٰهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴾

"And We did not send before you any messenger or prophet, but when he desired, the Shayṭān made a suggestion respecting his desire; but Allāh annuls that which the Shayṭān casts, then does Allāh establish His communications, and Allāh is Knowing, Wise."[210]

If this tradition were to be accepted, it would put a question mark over the infallibility of the prophets, even with respect to receiving the revelation, and would serve to erode away the confidence in them.

At this juncture, before we endeavour to study and critically examine the traditions, we should first separate the text of verse 52 of Sūratul Ḥajj from the traditions fabricated in connection with it and see what the verse actually has to say:

Certainly, the text of this verse, disregarding the false annotations, not only does not taint the infallibility of the prophets but on the contrary, is one of the proofs of their infallibility. This is because, it says: Whenever they possessed a positive plan and desire (every kind of desire is called امنية, but here امنية refers to a positive and constructive scheme for the advancement of their objectives; if it was not constructive, the Satan would never seek to put whisperings into it) the Satan would attack it, but before he could exert an influence upon their will or acts, Allāh would nullify the Satanic inspirations and fortify His verses.

(It should be noted that the "ف" in فَيَنسَخُ اللهُ denotes a sequence without any intervening time internal, i.e. immediately and without any time interval, Allāh would annul and eliminate the inspirations and the whisperings of the Satan.)

Testifying to this statement is another verse of the Qurʾān which explicitly states:

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[210] *Sūratul Ḥajj* (22), Verse 52

﴿ وَ لَوْ لاَ أَنْ ثَبَّتْنَاكَ لَقَدْ كِدْتَ تَرْكَنُ إِلَيْهِمْ شَيْئاً قَلِيلاً ﴾

"And had it not been that We had already established you, (and had you not been protected from deviation under the shelter of infallibility) you would certainly have been near to incline to them a little."[211]

In view of the fact that verse 73 of this same chapter indicates that the infidels and the polytheists, by means of their evil insinuations, strived to turn away the Noble Prophet ﷺ from the Divine revelation, it becomes clear that Allāh did not permit them to achieve this success by employing their diabolical suggestions.

Also, in verse 113 of Sūratul Nisā, we read:

﴿ وَ لَوْ لاَ فَضْلُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكَ وَ رَحْمَتُهُ لَهَمَّتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْهُمْ أَنْ يُضِلُّوكَ وَ مَا يُضِلُّونَ إِلاَّ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَ مَا يَضُرُّونَكَ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ﴾

"And were it not for Allāh's grace upon you and His mercy a party of them had certainly designed to bring you to perdition and they do not bring (aught) to perdition but their own souls, and they shall not harm you in any way."

All these indicate that Allāh, by means of His blessings and succour, never permitted the sinister suggestions of the devils from amongst the men and jinn to affect and influence the Noble Prophet ﷺ, and kept him protected from all kinds of deviation.

All the above is applicable if we take امنية to mean desire, plan and scheme (since, the original roots of this word are traced to assumption, supposition and description).

However, most of the commentators have taken امنية to mean recitation, and some have even sought to corroborate this by presenting poems of Ḥasān ibne Thābit.[212] Fakhr Rāzī too, in his

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[211] *Sūratul Isrā'* (17), Verse 74

[212] تمنى كتاب الله اول ليلة و آخرها لاقى حمام المقادر

commentary, has stated: تَمَنَّى, according to the lexicon, possesses two meanings: The first meaning is 'the desire of the heart' and the second is 'recitation'.[213]

If we were to also take امنية to mean recitation, the meaning of the verse would be that when the divine prophets used to recite the Divine verses and sermons before the infidels and the polytheists, the devils and (those possessing satanic attributes) would insert their words amongst the words of the prophets in order to mislead the people, just as they used to do with the Noble Prophet ﷺ too. Verse 26 of Sūratul Fuṣṣilat says:

﴿ وَ قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لاَ تَسْمَعُوا لِهٰذَا الْقُرْآنِ وَ الْغَوْا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَغْلِبُونَ ﴾

"And those who disbelieve say: Do not listen to this Quran and make noise therein, perhaps you may overcome."

In the light of this meaning, the meaning of the next verse (53 of Sūratul Ḥajj) also becomes clear when it says:

﴿ لِيَجْعَلَ مَا يُلْقِي الشَّيْطَانُ فِتْنَةً لِلَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ وَ الْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ ﴾

"So that He may make what the Shayṭān casts a trial for those in whose hearts is disease and those whose hearts are hard."[214]

In *Tāj al-ʿArūs*, the commentary of the book *Qāmūs*, and also in the actual text of the book *Qāmūs*, تمنى الكتاب has been stated to mean تلاوة الكتاب (recitation of the book). Then, quoting from Azharī, it says: تلاوة has been called امنية because whenever the reciter reaches a verse of mercy, he desires (Allāh's) mercy and whenever he reaches a verse of chastisement, he desires deliverance from it. However, the book *Maqāyīs al-Lughah* is of the opinion that this word has been made to mean تلاوة because it is a kind of measurement and placement of every verse it is own place.

[213] *The Commentary of Fakhr Rāzī*, vol. 23, pg. 51

[214] Of course, the interpretation of the last verse, on the basis of the first meaning, is not without its objections. This is because the satanic

Even today, it is a common practice that when reformers of human societies deliver beneficial and constructive lectures to a section of the society, at times, those with diseased hearts raise an uproar and by means of misleading slogans and satanic expressions attempt to make light of those speeches and obliterate them by means of their futile utterances. And this, in reality, is an examination for the people of the society and it is here that those with diseased hearts swerve away from the path of truth whereas for the Mu'mins, it becomes a means for acquiring greater awareness of the truthfulness of the prophets ﻋﻠﻴﻬﻢ ﺍﻟﺴﻼﻡ. This, in turn, would make the people humble towards their invitation to the truth.

﴿ وَ لِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَيُؤْمِنُوا بِهِ فَتُخْبِتَ لَهُ قُلُوبُهُمْ ﴾

"And that those on whom knowledge has been bestowed may learn that the (Qurʾān) is the Truth from thy Lord, and that they may believe therein, and their hearts may be made humbly (open) to it."[215]

inspirations in the souls of the Prophets, despite the fact that they were immediately eliminated and annulled by means of divine succor, cannot be a means of examination for the hypocrites and those possessing diseased hearts. This is because these whisperings do not have any external manifestation and appearance, rather, they are ephemeral inspirations inside the souls of the Prophets.

Except if it is said that the meaning is that when the divine Prophets desired to implement their desires and plans, in practice, the devils engaged themselves in sabotaging and whispering diabolical suggestions - this being the appropriate occasion for trials and examinations. And with this explanation, the coherence and relationship between the three verses (52, 53 and 54 of Sūratul Ḥajj) is preserved and maintained.

Strangely enough, some of the commentators have presented various interpretations and possibilities for the first verse without endeavouring to preserve the harmony between it and the two subsequent verses.

[215] *Sūratul Ḥajj* (22), Verse 54

In any case, from what has been stated above, we have realized that the verse under consideration does not contain anything which is inconsistent with the infallibility of the prophets vis-à-vis errors and deviation. Rather, as has been stated before, the verse emphasizes the issue of infallibility since it says that Allāh protects His prophets while they receive the revelation or when they intend to perform some other work, from the satanic inspirations and whisperings.

Now let us turn to the traditions and myths that have been mentioned in this section and deduce their worth, for things have reached such a stage that lately the devils, for the purpose of creating disturbance in connection with the Noble Prophet ﷺ, have set about writing the book Satanic Verses.

Just as it had been previously stated, not only did the text of the mentioned verses not possess anything which contradicted the infallibility of the prophets, on the contrary, they prove and establish their infallibility. However, traditions found in some of the secondary Sunnite sources state things that are indeed strange in every respect, and therefore ought to be studied and discussed separately. These traditions, which we had presented at the start of this discussion, have been reported, sometimes, from Ibne ʿAbbas, at other times from Saʿīd ibne Jubaīr and occasionally from some other 'companions' or 'followers'.[216]

However, these traditions are not to be seen in any of the Shiite sources and, according to some of the Sunni scholars, these are also not to be found in any of the six Ṣiḥāḥ of the Sunni. So much so that Murāghi, in his commentary, says: These traditions are undoubtedly a fabrication of the heretics and foreign hands, and have not been found in any of the authentic books. The fundamentals of the religion of Islam reject them and sound intellect testifies to their

[216] For more information regarding the chains of narrators of these traditions in the books of the Sunnis, refer the book *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, vol. 4, pg. 366-368, under verse 52 of Sūratul Ḥajj.

falsehood and incorrectness...It is obligatory for all the scholars to disregard them and refrain from wasting their time in explaining and interpreting them, especially in view of the fact that trustworthy narrators have explicitly declared them to be lies and fabrications.[217]

We observe this same meaning, although in a different form, in *Tafsīr Jawāhir* of Ṭanṭāwī, wherein he says: These traditions have not been mentioned in any of the Ṣiḥāḥ like *Muwaṭṭa* of Mālik, *Ṣaḥīḥ* Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim, *Jāmiʿ* Tirmiḍī, *Sunan* Abī Dāwūd and *Sunan* Nisāʾī[218], and it is for this reason that the book, *Tafsīr al-Wusūl Li Jāmiʿ al-Usūl* - a collection of all the interpretive traditions of the six Ṣiḥāḥ - does not report these traditions while interpreting the verses of Sūratul Najm. Thus, it is inappropriate to attach importance to them and talk about them, let alone debate about them... These traditions are just manifest lies![219]

One of the testimonies which Fakhr Rāzī presents to prove it to be a fabrication is that in *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī* it has been reported from the Noble Prophet ﷺ that when he recited Sūratul Najm, the Muslims and the polytheists, the men and the jinn, all fell into prostration; and the tradition bears no mention of the story of gharānīq. Furthermore, this tradition (which has been reported in *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*) has been reported by several chains of narrators and not the slightest mention of the story of Gharānīq meets the eye.[220]

Not only the abovementioned commentators, but even others such as Qurtubi in his commentary *al-Jamiʿ*, Sayyid Qutb in his commentary *Fi Dhilāl al-Qurʾān*, other Sunni scholars and all of the distinguished and celebrated Shiʿite scholars have branded this tradition as a fabrication and have attributed it to the enemies of Islam.

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[217] *Tafsīr Murāghī*, vol. 17, pg. 130, under the abovementioned verse.

[218] It should be noted that the book *Muwaṭṭa* of Mālik is not regarded as one of the six Ṣiḥāḥ books. The book *Sunan Ibn Mājah* is the sixth book of the Ṣiḥāḥ.

[219] *Tafsīr Jawāhir*, vol. 6, pg. 46

[220] *The commentary of Fakhr Rāzī*, vol. 23, pg. 50

As such, it is not strange that the enemies of Islam, especially the inimical Orientalists, have publicized this tradition and reported it with a great deal of embellishment. We have also witnessed that recently they have forced a writer, coming from an evil lineage, to author a book under the title of *The Satanic Verses* and, by means of extremely derogatory and vile expressions in the course of a fictitious and make-believe story, not only question the sanctities of Islam but also exhibit sacrilege towards the great prophets (like Ibrāhīm), who are looked upon with great reverence by all the Divine religions.

And again it is not strange that the English text of this book was translated with astonishing swiftness into different languages and distributed all over the world. And when Āyatullāh Khomeini ﵀ issued his historical fatwa declaring the author, Salman Rushdie, to have become an apostate and thereby deserving to be compulsorily killed, there arose in Rushdie's favour, on the part of the colonial governments and enemies of Islam, a tidal wave of support, so great that the world had never seen the like of it before. This amazing phenomenon revealed the reality that Salman Rushdie was not acting alone, and the issue is much more than just authoring an anti-Islamic book. It is, in fact, a conspiracy that has been chalked out by the Western colonial powers and the Zionists with the objective of bludgeoning Islam – a conspiracy which they support seriously and in great earnest.

But the firm resistance and perseverance of Āyatullāh Khomeini ﵀ in his fatwa, the continuation of his policy on the part of his successors and the global acceptance of this historical fatwa by the general Muslim public served to foil the conspiracy of the conspirators. And until this date, as we write this, the author of the mentioned book leads his life in total concealment and is scrupulously protected by the colonial governments; it appears that he shall be forced to lead the rest of his life in this fashion and probably he might be killed by his very mentors to extricate themselves from this humiliation. Thus, the 'creating cause' for this

fabricated tradition also acts as its 'preserving cause', i.e. a conspiracy was initiated on the part of the enemies of Islam and now, after more than a thousand years, another group from amongst them strive to continue this conspiracy, although on a much wider scale.

As such, we do not deem it necessary to present, for this tradition, explanations and justifications which, for example, appear in great detail in the commentary *Rūḥul Maʿānī* and concisely in other commentaries. This is because a tradition, which is fundamentally rotten and which has been emphatically branded as a forgery on the part of eminent Islamic scholars, does not need to be explained.

However, we only wish to present some points which shall provide some more clarification:

The relentless, uncompromising and perpetual fight of the Noble Prophet ﷺ against idolatry, from the beginning of his invitation (to Islam) until the end of his life, is a fact which is not concealed from friend and foe alike. The most important issue for which he was never willing to compromise and exhibit flexibility was this very issue. Despite this, how could he have possibly commended and praised the idols of the polytheists by such words, and spoken of them in good light?

The teachings of Islam declare that the only sin that can never be forgiven and overlooked is polytheism, and it is for this reason that Islam has regarded the destruction of centers of idolatry, whatever the consequence, as obligatory, and the entire Qurʾān is a testimony to this fact. This very fact is clearly indicative of the fabricated nature of the tradition of Gharānīq, in which idols have been commended!

Apart from this, those who have fabricated the story of Gharānīq have overlooked the fact that a cursory reading of the verses of Sūratul Najm would be sufficient to prove this myth to be false, and reveal that there exists no harmony between the commendation of the idols by means of the sentence:

تِلْكَ الْغَرَانِيقُ الْعُلْيَ وَإِنَّ شَفاَعَتَهُنَّ لَتُرْتَجَى.

and the verses situated before and after it. This is because, in the beginning of this very chapter, it has been explicitly stated that the Noble Prophet ﷺ does not speak of his own desire and whatever he says in connection with the Islamic beliefs and laws, is Divine revelation:

﴿ وَ مَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوىٰ إِنْ هُوَ إِلاَّ وَحْيٌ يُوْحىٰ ﴾

"Nor does he speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed."[221]

The Qurʾān also emphasizes that the Noble Prophet ﷺ shall never go astray from the true path and never lose himself:

﴿ مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَ مَا غَوىٰ ﴾

"Your companion does not err, nor does he go astray."[222]

What could be greater deviation than interpolating speeches of polytheism and praises of idols within the verses of monotheism? And as for speaking of one's desire, what could be worse than adding satanic words:

تِلْكَ الْغَرَانِيقُ الْعُلْيَ

to Allāh's speech?

Interestingly, the verses following the verses presently under consideration explicitly criticize and denounce the idols and the idol-worshippers and say:

﴿ إِنْ هِيَ إِلاَّ أَسْمَآءٌ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَ آبَاؤُكُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلاَّ الظَّنَّ وَ مَا تَهْوَىٰ الأَنْفُسُ ﴾

[221] *Sūratul Najm* (53), Verse 3,4
[222] Ibid., Verse 2

“They are naught but names which you have named, you and your fathers; Allāh has not sent for them any authority. They follow naught but conjecture and the low desires which (their) souls incline to; and certainly the guidance has come to them from their Lord.”[223]

Which intellect would be given to believe that a wise and intelligent person, occupying the rank of prophethood and in the process of reciting Divine revelation would, in one sentence, praise the idols while two sentences later deprecate them with such vehemence and intensity? How can this blatant contradiction in two consecutive sentences be explained and justified?

Here we have to acknowledge that the cohesion of the verses of the Noble Qurʾān are such that any impure addition made to it on the part of inimical and tendentious individuals is thrown out, and they clearly reveal it to be a patch which is inharmonious and an addition that is unrelated. This is the fate which the tradition of Gharānīq suffers from amidst the verses of the Noble Qurʾān.

At this juncture, one question remains to be answered and that is: How is it that an issue, so baseless and unsubstantiated, has come to acquire such popularity?

The answer to this question is not very difficult and intricate; the popularity of this tradition is, to a great extent, indebted to the efforts of the enemies of Islam, who imagine that they have managed to lay their hands on a good pretext to blemish the infallibility of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and the authenticity of the Noble Qurʾān. Thus, the reason for its popularity amongst the enemies is clearly comprehended. However, its popularity amongst the Islamic historians, according to some of the Islamic scholars, stems from the fact that many of the historians are always on the lookout for new, exciting and exceptional issues - however much there may exist a question mark over their historical authenticity -

[223] *Sūratul Najm* (53), Verse 23

so that they can make their books more interesting and tumultuous. And since the myth of gharāniq is unprecedented in the life of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, they, without examining the weakness of its chain of narrators and the baseless nature of its contents, record it in their books of history and traditions; subsequently, others dwell upon it with the intention of subjecting it to a critical examination and study.

## CONCLUSION

From what has been discussed above, it becomes plain and clear that not only do the verses of the Qur'ān not contain anything which contradicts the infallibility of the prophets, rather, these very verses, which have been imagined to be contradicting it, contain clear indications that accentuate the rank of infallibility for them.[224]

[224] *Tafsīr Payām-e-Qur'an*, vol. 7, pg. 164

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